

The Rural
SCHOOL-TEACHER

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Buchanan White S



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The Author and little Mary Deer, an Indian girl
pupil.

(Frontispiece.)

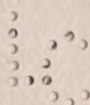
The
Rural School = Teacher
or, A Double West Virginia Love Story

By
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Illustrated by
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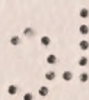


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AUTHOR'S NOTE.

Reading for pastime is a pernicious habit. The reader usually procures fascinating stories for the purpose, which naturally stifle desires for that which is elevating and refined. Those who acquire the habit simply glance over the pages without regard to pronunciation or expression. They read by absorption, as it were, and hasten over the pages to reach the climax of the story.

An interest in good literature may be inspired by placing at the disposal of the young people, good literature of the helpful and stimulating kind, books which are of an educational character—reading which is instructive as well as interesting, wholesome and intrinsically valuable.

In the preparation of the "Rural School-Teacher," the author has endeavored to combine sentiments which tend to elevate and broaden one's conception, with those incorporated for interest alone. The greater portion of the story is fiction, yet much true history is so interwoven as to render the book valuable from an historical standpoint.

Teachers daily verify the references to indif-

ference of parents, and their inclination to enter into the sympathies of their children when their sensitive and impulsive nature is in any manner aroused by the teacher.

The purported history of the characters connected with the story reveals many latent characteristics of human nature, which influence and strengthen the aesthetic attributes of the mind. There is nothing more pathetic in nature than the transition from youth, when there are no fixed intentions, to mature manhood of unwavering stability and firmness of purpose. There is no greater treasure in the universe to-day than a well balanced mind and an equable temper. The work of the teacher is both critical and appreciative. The horizon of the children's thoughts may be widened and their sense of appreciation cultivated by a little judicious executive ability.

THE RURAL SCHOOL-TEACHER

CHAPTER I.

Now the old schoolhouse is banished,
Like so many of its race,
To the elements that wrought it—
And a new one holds its place.
—*Carleton.*

In a secluded spot in one of the richest counties in Virginia, now West Virginia, was born the leading character of this story—Leonard Lowell. Nothing was observed in his early life to indicate extraordinary gifts of nature, except the charms of a gentle disposition which increased in magnetic power as he advanced in years.

With eyes of blue and dimpled cheeks, he romped and played like other children. There came a time, however, when the latent powers of innocent child-life developed into wise and masterly activity. Through his influence, many young people were led to higher and nobler aspirations.

Leonard's first day at school was an emotional one to him. His only source of enjoyment had been the flowers of the field, the birds of the air, and a Maltese kitten, which had formed so great an attachment for him, that it seemed cruel to mar their happiness by any manner of separation. Many a dim, misty winter's night, long after Leonard had retired and lay snugly ensconced in his baby robe, securely protected from the chilly blasts of wintry storms, its "meow" could be heard in the quiet hours of the darkest night.

The school in which Leonard enrolled was one of the first kindergarten schools taught in West Virginia after the War of the Rebellion. His interest was quickly aroused, as the teacher passed from one pupil to another with words of cheer and countenance beaming with pleasure. And his ecstasy knew no bounds when he saw pleasant smiles envelop her face, then vanish and reappear like the sunshine and the shadow.

The wise teacher endeavors to gain the goodwill of her pupils at the beginning of the term, and Miss Asher sought to accomplish this in too short a time. Leonard had never experienced so much happiness in all his life. He thought his teacher was the loveliest creature in the world except—his Maltese kitten.

Many teachers fail because they seek to obtain results by methods which are contrary to nature. Various methods are adopted to gain

the affection of pupils, for it is generally known that children do not succeed well unless they respect and love the teacher.

Do not men engaged in all of life's vocations, professional men, orators, statesmen, politicians, and even ministers, resort to different methods of winning approbation? Who, then, should complain of the teacher who chooses to adopt similar methods?

Was it not in harmony with nature's decrees for this young lady to resort to any fair means which might enable her to accomplish desired results?

The child mind is so susceptible to impressions, and so plastic in its existence, that no wonder Leonard returned home that evening filled with emotions of the beautiful and the good, as portrayed by his teacher, whose life had been devoted to the cause of education.

No one objects to hearing nice things said about him. All seem to covet approbation. Every individual is conscious of his shortcomings. This consciousness is revealed, either directly or subconsciously, and no one cares to have his faults rehearsed in the manner so common with some people.

Chronic criticism, incessant scolding, and never-executed threats are especially harmful to young people, and should be avoided by those whose duty it is to make the plane of existence inspiring and conducive to a higher moral

tone; and every effort to thwart this purpose is criminal in its nature.

Most children possess a somewhat passionate temper, which, by judicious management may be so ameliorated as to transform them into agreeable companions. An obstinate will cannot be conquered by harsh and arbitrary methods of discipline. Instead of applying paralyzing blows of harsh criticism, which is too often done in a spirit of resentment, one should seek to aid in the development by persuasive and humane methods, so as to bring greatest happiness and strength into the lives of those for whom the schools are maintained at so great expense.

Leonard's troubles began on the second day, when other children received as much attention from the teacher as he. This did not please him. He was disappointed, wounded in spirit and desired to return home.

Who can understand the heart-aches of childhood, the conversion of love into hatred by that arch enemy, jealousy, caused by misplaced confidence?

"When this potent instigator of mischief secures a foothold on the virgin soil of human passion; when the fires of jealousy kindle and rekindle from combustion of pent-up hatred, engendered by real or imaginary deception," how quickly the selfish nature asserts itself in efforts to oppose adverse influences.

A striking example of this kind of jealousy is recorded in the story of the shepherd lad, Joseph, whose brothers hated him so intensely, because he was his father's favorite, that they cast him into the pit in the wilderness, but afterward sold him as a slave to a company of Ishmaelites, for twenty pieces of silver.

Leonard was confident the boys and girls had invaded his domain, and were intruding upon rights peculiarly his own. He regarded all such intrusion an offence against him and his individual rights. This was the situation when he left school at the close of the second day.

His teacher had been too kind, too affectionate during the first few hours of their association.

No teacher can afford to continue long in lavish kindness and excessive privileges without endangering school government. Instructors are not equally successful in teaching the branches required, and in maintaining proper discipline.

It is equally true, that many fail because they become too intimate with pupils during class work, and too familiar during periods set apart for recreation. American boys and girls improve opportunities for mischief, and usually retain all advantages gained during familiar moods of the teacher.

Miss Asher made the mistake by presenting everything in so pleasant a manner on the first

day, and then in depriving the children of these privileges afterward, for the little ones naturally expected a continuation of individual attention and much time for amusement.

Leonard was opposed to theories so repulsive, and would not willingly return to school, although he was delighted with everything about the premises except this apparent deception on the part of the teacher.

He had already learned two words, and had a clear conception of the letters composing each in his mind. Every time he saw the word "cat," he thought of his Maltese at home. Notwithstanding all these pleasant features, he would not be persuaded to return to school, and his mother, one of those kindly disposed mothers who believe in gratifying many caprices of childhood, consented for him to stay at home.

During the early period of youth, the child has no fixed intentions, and is influenced largely by impulses of the moment.

At the end of the month, when Miss Asher called at the Lowell home to inquire about Leonard, she was informed that the little boy had not been treated right, and would not be required to attend school any more.

Parents often allow children to dictate their own terms, when petty differences arise between them and the teacher, without endeavoring to ascertain the cause of the disaffection.

For this reason teachers are often subjected to criticism by fond parents who give much credence to what the children report.

It is quite common for teachers to receive notes like the following: "Please make Johnny Day quit throwing snowballs at my boy, or I will keep him at home." "If you don't whip Johnny Day for running over my boy at school, I will see what the law is on the subject." Notes of this character are sent to teachers, by parents, who, knowing only one side of the case, are prone to decide in favor of their own children whose veracity they think should at all times prevail.

There is no other profession in which those who are responsible for its honor have so many voluntary advisers. These would-be critics do not consider the time and money spent by teachers in preparing for the responsible work of the schoolroom by a thorough mastery of text-books, and by studying best methods of school government.

They do not know, that, "Teachers must understand the changing psychologic conditions which vary according to age and sex of pupils; that they must adapt the work of the schoolroom to the mental and physical conditions of the children; that they must arouse interest and enlist attention; that they must know how to employ devices to support the methods they use; that they must know that mental activity

depends upon the physical conditions of the body; that they must often supplement the author in teaching any subject."

Nor do they seem to realize that teachers are not tyrants and do not seek opportunities for punishing pupils, and that they can best govern the school without unwise interference of parents; that teachers are better qualified to teach and to discipline the school than are those who know nothing of the science of methods, or of the secret of school government; that it is the duty of teachers to impress upon the minds of the children exquisite recollections which will cling to them for life.

Miss Asher was conscientiously devoted to the duties of the schoolroom. No other teacher ever labored more zealously than she for the advancement of the children.

It is true, she may not have engaged in the profession as a matter of choice. Many of the best teachers were influenced by environment or necessity, rather than by choice.

Leonard's mother committed a grievous wrong when she permitted her boy to stay at home and to spend his time in idleness.

It is never wise to indulge children in all the varied whims of youth. At one time their highest regards may be centered upon the teacher; at another, their affections may be transferred to some one else. An attempt to gratify the impulsive nature of childhood,

would entail an onerous burden and would result in irreparable injury.

Leonard did not attend school any more for several years, and then only at the earnest solicitation of Merrill Mayo, a little girl friend of his childhood. She materially influenced his life after his childish whims had passed away with his youth. Her parents formerly lived in Japan, a country on the other side of the globe.

Merrill was present on that eventful first day of Miss Asher's school, when Leonard was so favorably impressed with the mythical charms of his teacher. She never forgot the dimpled cheeks, the laughing eyes, and the pleasant countenance of the urchin who received more attention from the teacher than other children.

In fact, she was jealous of him on this account, but her jealousy then, was of a different nature from that which influenced both their lives in later years.

When Leonard was twelve years old, Merrill persuaded him to enroll again as a pupil, and to try the fascinations of the schoolroom under new environments and with another teacher. The building in which the school was taught, was a typical log house, with puncheon floor and greased paper windows, situated on the Ohio River not far from Wheeling, in Western Virginia.

The teacher, whose name was Albert Gordon, was a young man who claimed to have a home somewhere in Old Virginia. He had lived for more than a year in a rudely constructed cabin in the valley, and had spent most of the time in hunting and fishing. He was so reserved in manner, that the settlers did not covet his acquaintance. They had become accustomed to his habits of exile, and no effort was made to learn the history of his life. Should any one attempt to converse with him, his answers were always evasive and conveyed the impression that some mystery overshadowed his life.

Many of the residents regarded him with suspicion. Some thought he might be an escaped convict, who was avoiding the penalty of the law by seclusion. Others suspected he was an emissary sent out to learn the situation in regard to secession of the States. None, however, approached the true reason for his voluntary exile in the valley hermitage.

It was by mere accident that they became better acquainted with the noble young man. He was out on the river in a canoe one balmy summer's evening, when a larger boat glided out on the surface of the water. He had lived in exile so long that he had acquired the habit of day-dreaming.

He saw the vessel approaching, but allowed the canoe to drift with the current without any perceptible effort to avert the danger. He had

dropped the oars and seemed lost to ~~all~~ the world, while the canoe gradually drifted into the wake of the vessel.

The pilot made every possible effort to arouse him from the reverie in which he appeared to be peacefully reposing, but without avail. The passengers and ship's crew witnessed the impending danger, powerless to do anything to save the young man's life.

At the moment when the suspense became unbearable, a shrill, pathetic scream, wild, weird and heart-rending, as the sound was wafted across the waters, resounded from the deck. This transhuman alarm affected his dormant sensibilities and aroused him from the trance. During the transitional moments, he saw a familiar face as a young lady on board leaned over the railing in efforts to attract his attention. By renewed efforts at reviving consciousness he freed himself from the spell of self-hypnotism. Distinctly he heard his name called,—Albert Gordon. Next moment the current capsized the craft, and, to all appearances, he was lost beneath the waves.

Gazing out from her position on the upper deck, Ethel Laxon recognized Albert Gordon as he sank beneath the foaming waters. She appealed for help. She begged that a boat might be lowered and everything in the power of human agency be done to rescue him from so hor-

rible a death. It seemed that no heroes had embarked on this pleasure trip, for none could be found who were willing to risk their lives in efforts to rescue the stranger.

More determined than was ever a soldier on the field of battle; braver than the bravest on board the vessel, Ethel went down in a boat to the rescue. And there, clinging to the ponderous water-wheel, was the object of her dangerous venture. Yes, there was Albert Gordon who had been refused Ethel Laxon's hand in marriage by an irate father.

Ethel had left home and friends in search of the one she loved so well. She was persistent in her efforts to find him that she might plead for a reconciliation with her father. During these months of vigilant search for her lover, her courage never abated. She had not heard a word from him since he left the community, and great was her surprise to see him drifting in the canoe on the surface of the clear stream. Even before she espied the birch-bark boat, she felt herself drawn with an irresistible power toward its occupant.

Albert Gordon's experience was frightful, indeed, as he performed those revolutions on the great water wheel, and had it not been for the courage of Ethel Laxon, his lifeless body would soon have floated at random to the bottom of the river. Her prompt action alone

saved his life, and they were soon basking in the sunshine of love, composed and happy on board the vessel which seemed to seek his destruction.

CHAPTER II.

Hearts, like apples, are hard and sour,
Till crushed by Pain's resistless power;
And yield their juices rich and bland
To none but Sorrow's heavy hand.

—*Holland.*

When Albert Gordon heard those cruel words of refusal from Ethel's father, he realized that further insistence would avail nothing except to make matters worse by irritating the old gentleman's obdurate disposition toward those whom he disliked. Broken-hearted and dangerously despondent, he decided to leave forever the scenes of his happiest days. He did not even inform Ethel of his intention, for he had been warned in terms most emphatic not to speak to her again.

After Albert's rescue from drowning they decided to postpone the wedding day, believing that Mr. Laxon would finally relent, for he loved his daughter dearly.

Had they known at the time of Albert Gordon's rescue, that Ethel's father was beside himself with grief on account of the disappearance

of his daughter, and that he had offered vast sums of money to any one who would restore her to him, they might have returned without fear of further opposition. But Mr. Laxon learned in the meantime, that his daughter was alive and well, and that they only waited for him to make an unconditional surrender of all objection to the marriage, so that, instead of sending the message of forgiveness, he hardened his heart against them.

In pursuance of their plans to await developments, it was agreed that Ethel should reside in Wheeling until something more definite could be learned of the situation. Wheeling was then a flourishing town on the Ohio River, not far from Albert's cabin home, and which, after the separation of Virginia, became the capital of the western division.

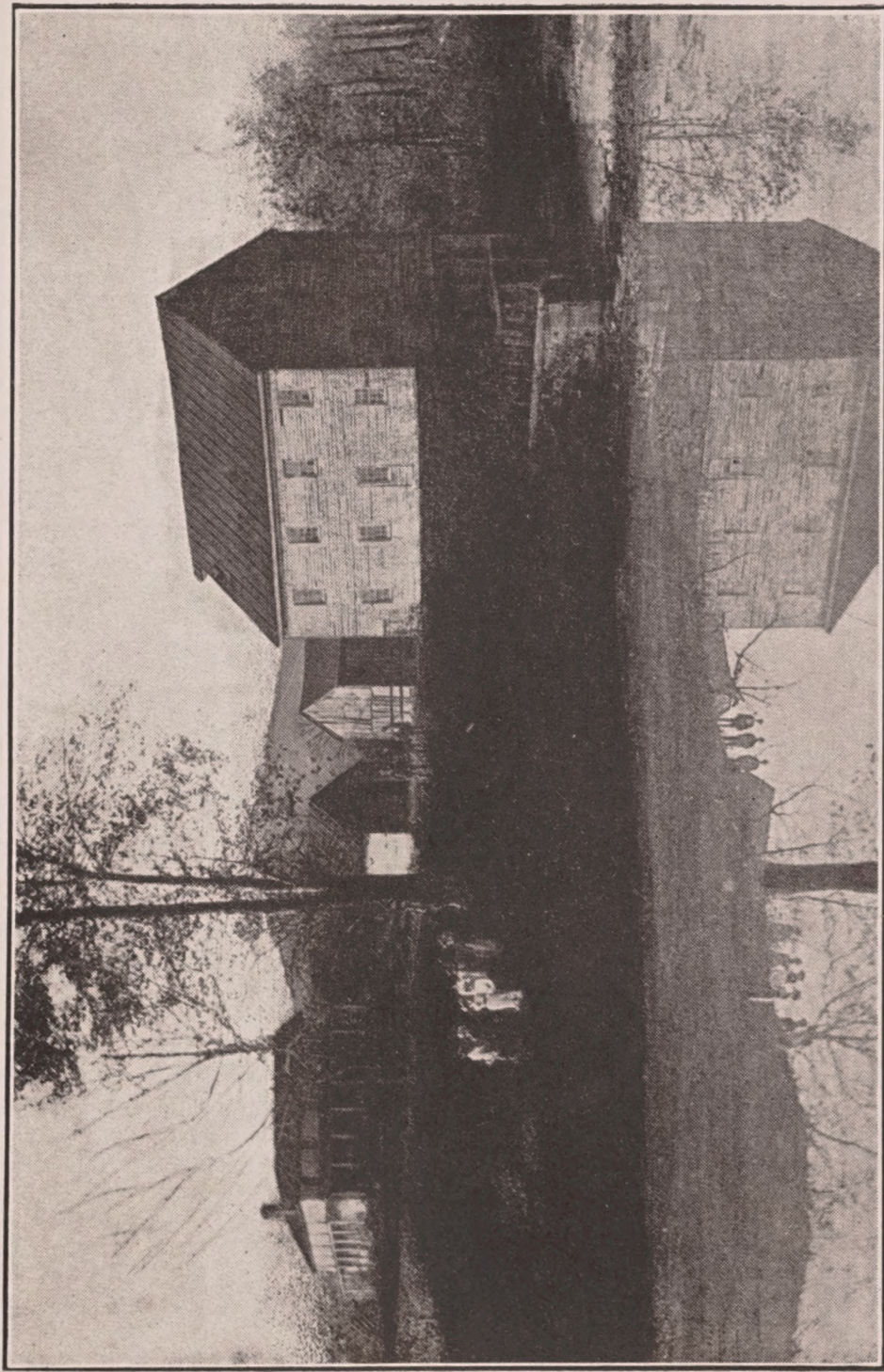
The happy couple spent many hours on the summit of Wheeling Hill. They often went to the place from which Major McCullough made his famous leap for life, when he so fearlessly endeavored to relieve the defenders of Fort Henry, but was separated from his men and surrounded by the Indians. No more daring feat of horsemanship was ever performed by man. McCullough, with his trusted rifle in one hand, and the reins of the bridle in the other, urged his noble steed over an almost perpendicular precipice of more than one hundred feet in descent.

Albert Gordon was now too happy to conceal his identity longer. He was related to some of the best families of the South, among whom was Major-General Gordon, who, a few years later, figured so conspicuously with the immortal "Stonewall" Jackson in the War of the Rebellion, in which many noble lives were lost in defence of principles advocated by the opposing governments.

When Albert returned to his refuge in the cabin, his heart was buoyant with hope for the future. He sought more elevating employment than rambling over the hills and through the valleys, in which he had taken up his abode. He had taught school at Middletown and at Richmond, and now wondered why he might not again devote a portion of his time to the cause of education.

As late as 1860, only three counties west of the mountains had free schools. The Virginia Constitution adopted in 1776, was silent on the subject of schools. It appears that not a word relating to education was incorporated in that first organic law framed for an American State.

Select schools were maintained by those who had the means to employ teachers for their children. But a good many parents residing in the primeval settlements did not possess a sufficient amount of this world's goods to maintain their families, and to pay tuition for their children in school.



Stonewall Jackson's Boyhood Home, and the Old Jackson Mills, near Weston, W. Va.

(Facing page 16.)

When Albert Gordon sent out a subscription for the purpose of making up a school, much interest was manifested, and more than thirty pupils enrolled. Among those who subscribed, as has already been intimated, were Merrill Mayo and Leonard Lowell. Leonard was not inclined to attend, but his little lady friend persuaded him to enroll. Her will was law with him, and he complied with her request.

Who can fathom the depths of child love, or comprehend the soul's attraction for a congenial companion with whom to dwell? Many mistakes are made by parents who dictate in the selection of playmates for their children, because of caste or other reasons best known to themselves.

Young people instinctively become attached to some playmates more than to others, and those whose companionship is most agreeable may not belong to the moneyed class. Some parents pay no attention to the disposition or character of those with whom their children associate.

Who can enumerate the lives of humiliation caused by unwise interference of parents in the choice of husbands for their daughters, or wives for their sons?

Positions of wealth and honor are too frequently substituted for genuine adoration and love born of the soul. There are many unhappy homes because nature is thwarted in her plans

to select congenial companions, that each may possess what the other lacks in consecration to a life of exquisite harmony.

It would be more conducive to happiness to live in a hut where love rules, than in a palace where its influence is never realized. Abiding faith and unfaltering love frequently have their inception in childhood, while the children yet romp on the village green, or play at hide-and-seek among the grasses on the greensward or in the verdant meadows.

Leonard was restless and dissatisfied when recitations were assigned, for he knew only a few letters of the alphabet. He was tempted to betake himself to the hills and valleys,—his favorite haunts.

When the aroma of the sweet-scented flowers float on the balmy breeze; when the butter-cups expose their golden vessels to view, and the apple blossoms gleam with renewed brightness in the sun-light; when the valleys and the sloping hillsides resound with the songs of the birds whose melody is exceeded by nothing else in the universe; when the imaged snow-flakes fall so majestically as to incite admiration, then the pent-up energy of robust boyhood rebels against arbitrary confinement, and seeks the pleasures of the hedge and the brook where his emotional nature may commune with all nature in the culmination of childhood ambition.

The philanthropist realizes that the greatest

problem of the age is to know how to deal with the boys, whose every inclination is influenced by the elements which support life, and to which all creation owes its existence.

A prominent educator recently said in the West Virginia School Journal:

"Every artist should know his materials. Most of us teachers do not. The teacher is always surest of success who sympathetically studies his pupils. It is generally recognized that 'the boy' furnishes the hardest problem."

"In the first place, he is full of trust; he believes everything. The world to him is full of wonder and he has not yet learned that appearances are deceptive, both in the world of nature and the world of man."

"In the second place he is curious to know. His eyes go everywhere to picture to him the grand new panorama of the world; and he is as assiduous in collecting photographs of nature's grand scenes as the tourist with his camera. His eyes are open to every sound of harmony and discord—the fluttering spray, the chiming brook, the thunder tone, the song of every bird is to him a voice from that beautiful, mysterious nature whose wonders he longs to explore."

"He is full of ambition, too. He longs for leadership; he is anxious to excel other boys in feats of physical prowess, or in any contest where victory is pleasant. Closely allied to this quality is love of approbation. No boy is in-

sensible to praise or blame. Praise carefully bestowed has a powerful influence over everybody."

"There is a fourth quality of boyhood that can by no means be omitted in this analysis, and that is incomprehensible vital force which urges him to ceaseless activity. He does not understand, nor do we, its mysterious source, nor the law of its action. We only know that he is filled with an unsuppressible energy—an energy that must spend itself upon something. We may determine the direction of its activity, but we can never seal up the fountain and stop its overflow."

"These are the chief elements of the boy—the bad boy and the good boy, and the teacher who would do his duty to the boy and to his own conscience, must ponder them well. The boy is a delicate instrument to play upon. It is not hard to produce discordant music; it is only through infinite pains that we may call out pleasing harmony."

An old time teacher could scarcely control a school at the present time, because of the changed conditions which develop with each succeeding generation. These conditions are not always more favorable than those which preceded them, but they take place with unerring certainty.

A prominent writer recently said in the "Manufacturer's Record":

"No man who honestly studies the situation can be otherwise than profoundly concerned over the conditions which are developing throughout this country in the changing character of the rising generation. However optimistic one may be, it is scarcely possible to find a business man who does not realize that within the last ten or fifteen years there has been a great change in the character of the boys of all sections."

"It is impossible to secure boys who can in any way compare in readiness to work, in ability and in concentration of effort with the boys of fifteen or twenty years ago. Here and there are to be found exceptions, but these exceptions are as refreshing to the business man as is the oasis in the desert to the traveler."

"The country seems to have gone mad on many subjects, but on none to a greater extent than on education, which, as it is carried on to-day, is largely a matter of miseducation. Boys are being trained away from a sense of responsibility, from concentration of effort, from a willingness to follow the only path which can possibly lead to mental, moral and financial success."

"We are developing throughout the country a disposition on the part of the boys, which drives them to a desire to get money or get other things without the willingness to give work in exchange. They seem to have been taught, either at home or at the schools, that they desire

to get something for nothing, not realizing, or at least unwilling to put in practice, that labor, honest toil of brain or brawn, is not the only sure road to success, but is the only honest road."

CHAPTER III.

Pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow-flakes on the river,
A moment white, then gone forever.

—*Burns.*

Whenever Leonard's restless nature prompted him to leave school, a reassuring smile or a kind word from Merrill Mayo would suffice to appease his inclination and induce him to remain. Most of the children of his age were in advance of him, but his manly pride asserted itself and he entered upon the duties assigned with a determination to succeed. Influenced by dame nature's attractions, his mind often went back to the time when his ideal teacher treated him so kindly on the first day of school, but appeared reserved and unfriendly on the second day.

All went well with him until he allowed his temper to obtain the mastery over his ambitious nature. This is common among boys and girls wherever they associate with one another. There is a latent jealousy in every bosom, which had its origin in the Garden of Eden, perhaps,

when Adam partook of the forbidden fruit and attempted to justify his act of disobedience by saying, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

Every boy has certain inalienable rights and he knows it, intuitively, perhaps, but he knows these rights are his by divine origin, and deems it a duty to defend them under all circumstances.

One day the boys were engaged in a spirited game of ball. Physically Leonard was a match for any player in the game. One of his opponents sought to obtain an advantage by unfair means. This was done by stealthily approaching from the rear, and striking him a blow with sufficient force to disable one arm entirely.

Leonard could not believe the injury was the result of an accident. From his position in the game, he could not see how such a blow could have been dealt without premeditation on the part of the guilty player. It had already dawned upon him that some effort at chicanery might be resorted to, but, being honest himself, he did not anticipate so unwarranted an attack. His passion dominated his deliberations so quickly that his pugilistic nature was aroused, and with the other hand he dealt his assailant a blow which sent him sprawling to the ground. Leonard would not strike the lad as he lay upon the turf, but waited for him to rise and renew the combat.

There were other boys in the game as muscular as he, and Leonard wondered whether some of those might not take sides against him. This thought had scarcely entered his mind when a burly lad with high cheek bones, whose general appearance was pugnacious, attempted to avenge the apparent wrong. He did not know that Leonard had acted solely in self-defence, and proceeded to the attack with a vengeance which showed malice aforethought, and a determination to do great bodily harm.

Leonard dexterously parried each stroke and thus protected himself from further injury. Finding he was more than a match for his adversary, even with one arm disabled, Leonard became the aggressor and succeeded in landing a blow on the young man's head which caused him, too, to measure his length upon the sod.

At this stage of the altercation, he gazed first at the boys lying on the ground, and then toward the schoolhouse. He wondered what would be the result of the unfortunate encounter. At that moment Merrill Mayo appeared on the scene. From a distance she had seen that cowardly boy strike Leonard, and also saw what he did in his own defence.

When Merrill saw the second boy fall, she ran to tell the teacher, but he could not be found. Hastening to the scene of the trouble, she gently placed a hand on Leonard's arm and conducted him to the schoolhouse. The moment

Merrill appeared on the play-ground, Leonard's passion subsided, and he attempted to apologize for his conduct. Having been an eye witness to all that transpired, she would not listen to an apology from him.

Leonard confidently expected to be formally dismissed from school, but the teacher did not even mention the matter, and the boys were ashamed to mention it to any one.

Mr. Gordon knew more about the trouble than any of the boys suspected. From a place of concealment he had seen all that took place. He observed that the punishment inflicted by Leonard was effective, though not administered by one in authority.

Viewing the situation from an executive standpoint, Mr. Gordon decided to await developments before taking any steps in regard to punishment.

Merrill was much concerned for fear Leonard would be expelled. She explained that he had acted solely in self-defence, and was not responsible for the trouble, but Mr. Gordon appeared indifferent and unconcerned, and would not converse with her on the subject. This apparent indifference was interpreted by Merrill to mean, that Leonard would be compelled to leave school. Acting upon the impulse of the moment, she proposed that they both withdraw at once and thus avoid the mortification of his

dismissal because of these violations of the rules.

The conditions here related disclose another type of deception by a school teacher. No one was ever more concerned in any matter of importance than was Albert Gordon in this unfortunate difficulty. But from a teacher's position, as viewed by individuals who presume to know more about the profession than those who devote their lives to the work of the schools, he could not safely express his opinion for fear of public censure.

Should he make known that he had witnessed the fight among the boys, would not some wise-acre insist, that all who were in any manner connected with it be punished alike? In the exercise of his best judgment he resolved to do nothing until such time as he might deem it wise to express his views in regard to punishment of pupils for offences committed while under the teacher's control.

The attorney-at-law who undertakes to defend a person charged with a crime, well knows it is not safe to depend upon public opinion while excitement prevails. The prejudice prevailing in the neighborhood where such crime has been committed, renders it almost impossible to secure an impartial jury of his countrymen to try the accused. Important cases of this character are often continued that the passions of the people may subside.

If Mr. Gordon had been at liberty to express an opinion, he would have commended Leonard for his manly defence under so great provocation. Teachers sometimes punish pupils when there is abundant evidence of justifiable defence. Such a course would have been cruel in Leonard's case, and Mr. Gordon was too wise to commit so flagrant a wrong against justice.

Although Leonard's injury was of a serious nature, he did not miss a single day from school. He suffered a good deal at night, which caused him to lose many hours of refreshing sleep, but he never missed a lesson. His progress was wonderful for one in his condition. Only one other person understood how he succeeded so well in the preparation of his lessons, and that person was Merrill Mayo.

Every evening from seven until nine o'clock, they studied together at her own fireside. She would solve the difficult problems, and do the writing for him, so that, by the close of the term he had outstripped many of his school-mates who were in advance of him at the beginning of the term.

CHAPTER IV.

Procrastination is the thief of time;
Year after year it steals till all are fled,
And, to the mercies of a moment leaves
The vast concerns of an eternal scheme.
—*Young.*

At the close of a beautiful Autumn day, Merrill Mayo's father received intelligence that some title papers to vast real estate owned by him were defective, and that a company of merchants in New York would contest his right to hold the property. Many valuable tracts of Virginia lands originally belonged to wealthy men residing in England.

Mr. Mayo determined to defend his claim to the estate, even at the risk of spending his fortune in attorney fees and costs in court. His counsellor advised him to proceed at once to England and have the defective documents corrected before proceedings should be instituted by the contestants. Acting upon this advice, he made preparations for the journey. To relieve the monotony incident to a tedious ocean voyage, he asked his wife and daughter to accompany him.

When Merrill learned of this contemplated trip across the ocean, she interposed objection, but could assign no other reason than, that she did not wish to be separated from Leonard so long. Those fond parents did not realize the depth of the love which filled the souls of these children. Such love exists only in the purity and simplicity of innocent childhood.

At Merrill's solicitation, Leonard went with them as far as the city of New York, and while waiting at the wharf, they covenanted to and with each other to remain steadfast in the love thus plighted in the complaisance of their youth.

The voyage was fraught with many dangers. Day after day the unhappy passengers lived in fear and suspense. Every moment seemed to bring new dangers. For several days and nights a dense fog enveloped the sea so that it was impossible to discern objects at a distance. The surging of the billows, as the vessel ascended and descended with the waves, made the situation more appalling.

Their condition appeared more terrorizing when it was learned that the pilot had become suddenly ill, and had continued to direct the course of the ship after he became delirious and did not know what he was doing. They knew not whither they had drifted during this interval of several hours. With no other person on board who understood the duties of pilot, they

realized the danger of being consigned to the chilly waters of the great ocean.

When the sea became a little calm, they saw in the dim distance an object floating half-submerged on the bosom of the ocean. They gave chase. The mysterious something kept pace with them, and for hours the engines were taxed to their utmost capacity.

By and by the phantom loomed up in larger proportions, and its form appeared more clearly defined. Those at the helm knew they were gaining, and, barring accidents, would soon overtake the floating prodigy. From the time the pilot had directed their course after he became unconscious, the vessel had drifted at random without reference to the points of the compass. There was now no means of learning how much it had deviated from the true course, nor did the passengers seem to care, as the chase became more exciting.

There was on board an old gentleman with gray hair, and beard almost as white as snow, who claimed, that several years before this voyage was made, he had seen a similar contrivance called a semi-submarine boat. It had been sent out from England, but for what purpose he never learned.

It was known, however, that such boats were in use at one time by the English, to destroy unfriendly objects floating within their juris-

diction. They were also employed when rapid transit was desired.

In view of all they could learn about the prodigy, they reasoned that it could not be a sea-monster, or it would not remain so near the surface, nor continue in a straight course. As they gained upon the floating phantom a sound resembling that made by an engine in motion was heard. In view of all the facts and circumstances, they concluded they had been chasing one of those sub-marine boats.

Since the English were also interested in the slavery traffic, it was thought the purpose of its visit to American waters was to learn of conditions in regard to slavery in the States. At any rate, they would follow the floating mystery to its destination.

This course, perhaps, saved their lives, for they soon sighted land off the coast of England not far from the mouth of the Thames River.

When Mr. Mayo went to inform his wife and daughter that all danger was past, Merrill had become unconscious. Fear had weighed so heavily upon her delicate constitution, that she no longer possessed sufficient strength to support so frail a being.

On the pillow of her couch was found a note addressed to Leonard Lowell. She had remembered him through all these frightful scenes, and when death seemed inevitable, had written

him a farewell message. When Merrill's parents read the note, they realized more fully the solemnity of her devotion for her childhood lover.

Merrill was taken to a hospital where she lingered for days, with the death angel hovering near in eager anticipation. She seemed to think that Leonard had fallen overboard. So vivid was this impression, that it was almost impossible to relieve her mind of the delusion when consciousness returned. Her chest rose and fell as though trying to burst the bonds that held her firmly bound to this impression.

Not until she again read her own message, did she realize that she was in error. Having become convinced that Leonard had never been on board, she implanted on her mother's brow and eyes and lips, a profusion of kisses, then closed her eyes and sweetly slept.

Mr. Mayo proceeded to adjust the defective land titles. He was everywhere greeted with marked respect. He could not understand why he was thus honored by strangers in a foreign land, until he learned the English people yet remembered that James Rumsey, inventor of the steamboat, was also a Virginian by birth.

Mr. Rumsey first built a steamer on the Potomac River not far from Shepherdstown, in what is now West Virginia. Several years later he went to England and built a steamer

and tested it on the Thames River. Mr. Rumsey never returned to Virginia, for while explaining his invention in London, he was taken suddenly ill and died within a few hours.

CHAPTER V.

A little learning is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring;
Their shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again.

—*Pope.*

When Leonard returned from New York, after the departure of Merrill and her parents, his whole nature seemed changed. The chirping songsters flitted among the trees unnoticed by him, and the flowers of fen or forest no longer possessed attractions for his imaginative mind.

His sorrow would not be appeased. He sought relief in various ways, but failed, until one day, in looking over some books in his mother's library, he found a volume which contained some accounts of early ocean voyages. He encountered so many hard words and nautical terms in the book, that he called upon his mother for help, and she kindly offered to read the story for him. She would read by the hour, and still he was not satisfied.

Perhaps if Merrill Mayo had not gone out on the great ocean, he never would have taken any interest in books on navigation. So earnest-

ly did he enter upon the study of the subject, that his general knowledge was augmented, and he became a better reader. Even Miss Asher's instruction was not superior to that of his own affectionate mother's.

Teachers may entertain affection for their pupils. By motherly endearments they may pretend to sacrifice their own best interests for the sake of the boys and girls. Yet no one except a mother can comprehend the magnitude of a mother's love. The wayward son may be forsaken by every one else, yet there still remains in the mother's breast genuine love for the boy.

When Mary Queen of Scotts was being importuned to obtain a divorce from her heartless husband, whom she had made sharer of her throne as Queen of Scotland, she would not be persuaded. The historian says:

"She would rather endure to the end of her days the tyranny and torment she experienced from her brutal husband, than hazard in the least degree the future greatness and glory of the infant which was lying in his cradle before her, equally unconscious of the grandeur which awaited him in future years, and of the strength of the maternal love which was smiling upon him from amid such sorrow and tears, and extending over him such gentle, but determined and effectual protection."

When the beautiful Queen was placed on

trial, and was found guilty, as an accessory to Babington's Conspiracy, her son, James of Scotland, made but little effort to prevent her execution. A few moments before her death, while in the execution hall, she said:

"Tell my son that I thought of him in my last moments, and that I have never yielded, either by word or deed to anything whatever, that might lead to his prejudice. Tell him to cherish the memory of his mother, and say that I sincerely hope his life may be happier than mine has been."

Love's potent influence is bounded only by infinity itself.

"There is a beautiful legend that at creation's dawn an angel came to earth, seeking something to take back with it to heaven. It returned with a bouquet of flowers, a baby's smile and a mother's love. When it reached the pearly gates of Paradise again, the flowers had withered, the baby's smile had vanished, but the mother's love was found to be as pure as the eternal waters that flowed by the heavenly throne and all the angels exclaimed, 'There is nothing on earth pure enough for heaven but a mother's love.' "

Leonard's mother was rejoiced to see her son changed from a careless, romping lad to one of studious habits and devotion to books. When the second term of school began in the valley,

Leonard appeared early on the premises anxious to renew his efforts to obtain an education.

Albert Gordon's happiness was now complete, since he had found the one he loved, and he tried to regain his self-composure, and to take counsel with his prudence. The lives of these young people exhibit another example of the sincerity of the soul for those who the Creator intended should become the source of their mutual happiness.

During these months of prolonged anxiety, Mr. Laxon persisted in opposing the marriage. This state of expectancy continued long after they hoped to receive an invitation to return home and be forgiven.

But when Mr. Laxon learned of their intention, he determined to teach Ethel a severe lesson. He was provoked beyond measure to think his daughter, who had been the recipient of every kindness which a doting father could bestow, should prefer to live a Gypsy life on account of a school-teacher.

Mr. Laxon had no eulogies for teachers. He claimed they engaged in the profession to avoid more arduous labor, being too indolent to comply with the scriptural injunction, "Earn thy bread by the sweat of thy face." His view has many supporters among certain classes to-day. Because a few engage in the profession and fail, many are subjected to criticism akin to ridicule.

There are misfits in all professions, and a

few incompetent persons engage in teaching. Even Luther, the Great Reformer, said:

"Such teachers and masters we have been obliged to have everywhere, who have known nothing themselves and have been able to teach nothing good or useful."

There was a time when almost any one who could write a legible hand, and could read with some degree of sentiment, was considered competent to teach school. That period has passed with the ages, and now all who desire to engage in the profession must secure a license or certificate, before they are allowed to teach in the free schools of the country.

A good many people do not comprehend the onerous duties devolving upon those who undertake to teach and train the youthful mind. They do not realize that teaching is one of the most honorable professions in which one can engage, and that to the teachers of the country we owe an enormous debt of gratitude. In this profession, appreciation is never lavishly bestowed.

Referring to the great work of the teachers, Dr. Wickersham says:

"The methods adopted in the work of teaching may be right or they may be wrong. Just so the horticulturist can stimulate his plants to a more active growth or he may destroy them; the lawyer may gain or lose his cause; the physician may cure or kill his patient; and even

the mechanic may operate upon his wood, or clay, or iron by skilful or unskilful processes. Immortal minds are committed to the teacher's charge. If he adopt right methods of teaching he can make those minds bear an image worthy of their heavenly origin and destiny and of Him who created them; but if he pursue wrong methods they may be marred and debased until they become the most lamentable of all spectacles, wrecked and ruined human souls."

"No man can operate skilfully upon a thing, the nature of which he does not understand. The farmer must understand the nature of the soil he cultivates; the blacksmith, the iron he fashions; the potter, the clay he moulds, before either can produce the most advantageous results."

"The human mind is certainly not less easy to comprehend than are soils, iron, or clay, that the teacher can safely be relieved from the special professional labor and study required of farmers, blacksmiths, and potters. True, like them, he may work like a machine, or work by imitating others, but such blind methods of procedure, unworthy of a man in any avocation of life, become almost criminal when applied to the education of human beings whose success in this world and happiness in the world to come, he may jeopardize."

The school is not the only agency which contributes to the acquisition of an education.

Doctor White, in his "Art of Teaching," enumerates some of these agencies which unite in securing desired results:

"The home, the school, the church, civil society, the State, industry, physical environment, and all else that touches man, are, in this wise sense, educational agencies, and each contributes something to the complex result called education."

Doctor Fitch, of England, gives an opinion in the following words:

"Men are educated from infancy to the grave by all the sights and sounds, the joys and sorrows, which they encounter, by the character and behavior of their friends, the nature of their surroundings, and by the books they read."

Alexander L. Wade, who for more than half a century was engaged in educational work in West Virginia, said:

"I am glad that I was called to be a teacher; and though I say with humility that my work has always seemed very imperfect, I have had as an ideal the example of the Man of Galilee who went about doing good, and who was called the 'Great Teacher.'"

Those who engage in educational work often sacrifice health, wealth and honor in the cause of moulding, guiding and directing the minds of the youth to higher spheres of development. They prepare the boys and girls for all the

positions in life from the cradle to the grave, and yet they are censured more than any other class of persons in existence.

Newell Dwight Hillis recently paid the following high tribute to teachers:

"More and more we are enthroning the teachers as the architects of the Republic. What the warrior was to the ancient regime, what the knight-errant was to feudalism, what the discoverer was in the time of Columbus, the teacher is to-day. Our city does well to exalt its teachers, to emphasize its schools and to weave chaplets for the scholar's brow."

"But the men who are controlling the destinies of the country to-day are men at whose feet have been poured out all the riches of politics, liberty, science and morals, and the teachers are the Nation's benefactors. The schoolhouse and the teacher represent America's greatest contribution to social progress."

"It is given to the solicitor to protect liberty, but it is the scholar who discovers the principles of freedom; it is given to legislatures to make the laws, but it is the scholar who discerns the principles; it is given to the merchant to feed and clothe the State, but it is for the scholar to make the citizen worth clothing and supporting; it is given to the church to make the citizen moral, but without the schoolhouse conscience would be untaught, rude and mistaken."

CHAPTER VI.

But you who seek to give and merit fame
And justly bear a critic's name,
Be sure yourself and your own reach to know,
How far your genius, taste and learning go.
—*Pope.*

There is a vast difference between the profession of teaching and other professions in which men engage. The success of an attorney-at-law does not depend upon his uprightness, his sobriety and his conscientious devotion to the task of elevating mankind. By inadvertence, or by ignorance, he may lose vast sums of his client's money, and not have a dollar with which to make restitution, and yet be permitted to practice law.

The physician may prescribe medicine, and its effects may or may not improve the patient's condition, yet he is not prohibited from experimenting upon others, and whether his patients live or die, the doctor bill must be paid. In fact, claims of this character have preference over all others except funeral expenses.

The dentist also has advantages unheard of by teachers. He may fill maxillary cavities be-

cause of necessity, or for improvement in facial expression. For whatever services he may render, he is not paid a small pittance by the month, but charges according to the kind and character of work done.

Even the minister may enter the sacred temple in humility, and admonish the members of the church to abstain from wickedness in all its forms, and "to read the scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life." Those who hear the admonition may disregard it entirely, and yet the minister feels that he has performed his Christian duty. When members of his flock become dissatisfied, they simply remain at home, and the "preacher" does not discommode himself to warn them of their downward course.

The law protects the church from disturbance during hours of worship, and no responsibility rests with the minister to preserve order. This can not be said of the teacher. He is held responsible for the conduct of the boys and girls five days in the week, and sometimes for what they do on Saturday and Sunday.

A proper distribution of authority by parents and teachers has concerned the law makers of every country on the face of the globe, and they are no nearer a proper solution than when they first began.

The school supplements, but in no sense can it be said to supplant the home or the church. While the aim of the school is to make good

citizens of all its pupils, it can not overcome the difficulties of environment and heredity. Most teachers are conscious of this fact, and seek to avoid any conflict of authority or of responsibility. There are many forces acting in opposition to the best efforts of the teacher, and these forces always influence in contrary directions.

The teacher's duties are not limited to teaching the branches prescribed in the course. Except responsibilities which pertain to securing and maintaining proper discipline, one of the most important duties of teachers and parents is to instill into the minds of the boys and girls a correct view of true patriotism.

Rev. Doctor Hopkins said on this great subject:

"A patriot is one who loves his country; but to love one's country does not involve hatred of every other country, nor love of strife and conquest. Nor does it mean love merely of the soil and of our country's physical endowments. It means love of the high ideals for which our country stands, and love for our country's children—white and red and black—through whom these ideals are to be made real."

"The kind of patriotism our country needs to-day is not the kind which spends itself in shouts and smoke, or even in marching in battle array; it is the kind which shows itself in a genuine love for the people and which sacrifices all to exalt and save them. It is not that spuri-

ous kind which keeps grinding away on the hurdy-gurdy of the dead past, endeavoring to revive the bitterness and strife of days gone by; it is the kind which hates and tries to overcome injustice and loves and tries to establish the good and the true."

"Never in our country's history did she need true patriotism more, men and women who dare to ignore the line of party and to defy the boss' whip, and who will speak out kindly, yet firmly against the evil and the false and for the good and the true."

"This does not mean standing on the street corner and proclaiming aloud your views; it means that when right and wrong are in the balance, you will always uphold the right. It means that when the popular current is flowing away from justice and virtue, you will, without ostentation, set your face in the opposite direction and boldly stem the tide."

Dr. Seeley in speaking of patriotism, says:

"Our young people need to be taught that patriotism means more than burning fire-crackers and making much noise on the Fourth of July, more than marching in a parade and shouting applause at patriotic speeches, more than worship of the stars and stripes, though all of these may be commendable; it means more even than readiness to spring forward at the call to arms in the moment of the country's peril."

"They must learn that patriotism makes its most important demands in times of peace, when the nation is not aroused by appeals to National honor, and when the people are not disturbed by the excitement of contest. He is the truest patriot who obeys the laws of his country; who discharges his duties both public and private unfailingly and courageously; who respects the rights of others, even though they differ in opinion from him."

George H. Martin referred to patriotism in these words:

"The new patriotism will return to the old standards. It will insist, that, if it is culpable to go into politics to serve selfish ends, it is still more culpable to stay out for selfish ends. If juries are packed, and so justice perverted; if votes are sold, and so elections purchased; if bribes are received, and so legislation is made corrupt; if public business is in the hands of spoilsmen, the blame will be laid at the door of the good men who allow it to be so."

"If this kind of patriotism is to be fostered in our land, it must come through the great body of teachers in our public schools. It must begin early, for the great mass of children leave school before they reach their teens. It will never be taught in the highest and best sense if not taught by the teachers of the public schools, who reach this vast body of children."

It is true of patriotism as of religion, a large

number of children never hear much about either at their own homes. Very few people take the pains to teach their children the import of the American flag. How forcibly this significance is expressed in the words of Senator Hoard:

“I have seen the glories of art and architecture and of river and mountain. I have seen the sun set on the Jungfrau and the moon rise over Mount Blanc. But the fairest vision on which these eyes ever rested was the flag of my country in a foreign port. Beautiful as a flower to those who love it; terrible as a meteor to those who hate it is the symbol of the power and the glory of fifty millions of Americans.”

CHAPTER VII.

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever;
Do noble things, not dream them, all day
long;
And so make life, death, and that vast forever
One grand, sweet song.

—*Charles Kingsley.*

Mr. Laxon was persistent in his refusal to consent to the marriage of his daughter and this school-teacher. This unexpected turn in affairs left the young people in doubt as to the wisdom of their course. They had mistaken the temper of the man. Ethel had become so tired of her lonely life, that she was on the verge of despair. She entertained such high regards for woman's rights, that she loathed to humiliate herself by asking Albert Gordon to name the wedding day.

He was differently situated. While engaged in educational pursuits, his mind was diverted from the embarrassing position in which his lady love was living. He did not realize how thoughtless he had been, nor how negligent had been his conduct toward her.

He seemed to have forgotten, that she had

left a good home where all was joy and comfort. Neither did he realize, that in law, they were nothing more to each other, than when they entered into this compact to become husband and wife.

This fact alone was sufficient to cause Ethel to grieve over the situation. She had patiently whiled away the hours until the day appointed for the wedding to be solemnized came, but when that time passed, with no culmination of her fondest hopes, her soul rebelled against a continuation of this state of uncertainty.

Ethel now wondered whether she had acted wisely in leaving home and mother for the sake of a school-teacher. Might not their love yet turn to hatred? They had no assurance that her father would ever change his mind in regard to the marriage. She longed to return home where she had been queen of the household.

Albert Gordon's second term of school closed. Being again free from the attractions of the schoolroom, he could more forcibly realize the position of his self-sacrificing friend, who had forsaken everything pertaining to home and friends because of her devotion to him, but he could see no way out of the difficulty.

No invitation had been extended for them to return home where all was joy and comfort. Neither did Mr. Gordon have a home prepared for his bride should the marriage be consum-

inated. Under the circumstances he suggested a postponement of the wedding day.

Having been sorely tried by this life of isolation, with no loved one to share her loneliness, Ethel's faith temporarily waned as the mist before the morning sun, and she left the room unperceived. She had looked forward to the wedding day with ever increasing emotion, and could not entertain ideas of further delay.

Why should he elect to prolong her anxiety to be with him always? With a faint smile diffusing her pallid countenance, she left the room unperceived.

Albert Gordon did not realize, until too late, the effect of this conclusion upon her already wounded and bleeding heart. Her soul rebelled against this state of expectancy. In her madness she momentarily forgot her admiration, respect and love for him. The suspense became unbearable. It was evident that she did not intend to return. Every nook and corner of the premises were searched but no Ethel could be found.

There are times when the heart is too full for utterance. With forebodings of evil, Albert returned to the cabin to suffer commensurate remorse for having blighted the hopes of one of God's fairest creatures.

Day after day he roamed about over the hilly uplands, and through deepest recesses of the forest. With thoughts chasing each other with lightning-like rapidity, he went to every tryst-

ing place which they had so often frequented when they drank from love's sweetest fountain.

Time and again he went to the summit of Wheeling Hill where their souls had communed in complete adoration, vainly hoping that some trace of her might be found, but all his efforts seemed only to magnify the anguish of his soul in fruitless endeavor.

The time for the next term of school came only too soon for the disconsolate young man. No tidings of his loved one had been received. He could not believe that she was numbered with the dead, yet he entertained but little hope of ever seeing her again on earth, and in his heart existed an aching void which all the riches of earth could not fill. He sought to drown past memories by diverting his mind to the responsibilities of the schoolroom.

Many of his former pupils enrolled, and with them a few new ones. Among the latter, was a beautiful damsel of sixteen summers, who came from over the sea. Her name was Ellen Steuben. She possessed an enviable disposition, was sweet-tempered, kindly disposed and highly cultured. Mr. Gordon observed that she was well educated for one so young, and recommended high school branches, but she did not so elect.

So well had Leonard improved the time during vacation, that he was prepared for advanced work in a few branches. For this advancement



On the summit of Wheeling Hill.
(Facing page 52.)

he was indebted to his mother, who had so faithfully assisted him during the long summer months.

When the organization of the school was complete, Mr. Gordon was surprised to learn that this lady of foreign birth and Leonard Lowell were in all classes together—a queer coincidence. He could not see why she chose to be so classified.

They soon became agreeable companions. Her proffered aid in the preparation of difficult lessons was appreciated. Leonard no longer needed help from the teacher. Their acquaintance ripened into friendship. Mr. Gordon was aware of this increasing intimacy, and for the first time did he look upon Leonard in other than a kindly spirit.

He wondered if it was jealousy which thus affected him, as day after day he became more irritable because these young people worked together and appeared so perfectly contented in each other's company.

Since there is a cause for every effect, Mr. Gordon believed Ellen had a design in entering all classes alone with Leonard, but he was not in position to complain, for they never violated any rules of the school.

Ellen's affability so impressed Leonard, that his infatuation increased with every passing moment. Enraptured by her style and manner, he seemed to have forgotten his adoration for

the little maiden who had crossed the great ocean, and from whom he had heard nothing since her departure.

Ellen was like Merrill in many ways. At times Leonard almost realized he was in Merrill's presence, so similar were the actions of the two girls. He could hardly believe he was in the company of a stranger whom he had never seen until the beginning of that term of school.

Ellen understood his likes and dislikes as perfectly as if they had grown up together. To say the least, he was under the mystic charms of a lovely being. How gentle, how sweet, how lovable she appeared to him as those brilliant eyes gazed into his own bashful face.

Ellen Steuben could have told him how she learned of his personality, even while she was yet far away across the waters. She could have informed him that she and Merrill had become acquainted at her own home in England, and that she had heard from Merrill's own lips of his many noble traits of character, and these encomiums, enunciated in the ecstasy of childish delight, had created within her breast a longing to see him with her own eyes, to associate with him, and to realize the joys which had been Merrill's happy possession while in his company.

Merrill had, in confidence, imparted to her many secrets, as girls are inclined to do, of how

she loved Leonard and had longed to return home that they might again revel in the pleasures which were so conducive to her complete happiness.

These disclosures of implicit fidelity, laid the foundation for a deep-laid plot to impose upon Merrill's confidence, and Ellen proceeded to carry her plans into execution. For the first time in her life did she deceive her parents by telling a falsehood.

CHAPTER VIII.

Our whitest pearl we never find;
Our ripest fruit we never reach;
The flowering moments of the mind,
Drop half their petals in our speech.
—*Holmes.*

Ellen Steuben was the only child of the family. Her parents were wealthy. She often viewed the enigmatic love stage with a vehement desire to realize its potent influence in her own soul.

As she read stories of love for love's sake, she acknowledged that she would make any concessions which would enable her to idolize as lovers do in the story books. She knew what it meant to love father and mother, but from the lover's standpoint, her heart was yet ignorant of its magic influence to rule or ruin those affected by its power.

Since she and Merrill possessed so many traits in common, Ellen wondered whether Leonard might not become as deeply interested in her, under attractive influences, as she had been devoted to Merrill. Acting upon this pre-

sumption, she planned a trip to the States ostensibly for the benefit of her health.

Ellen's father was ever ready to promote the happiness of his daughter, and when informed of her declining health, and that her physician had recommended a change of climate, he agreed to send her to the United States of America where certain health resorts are said to possess more medicinal properties than any others in the world.

Mr. Steuben was postmaster in the city where he resided in England, and Ellen had access to all departments of the office. She cunningly made use of the opportunity thus afforded, to intercept Merrill's letters to her sweetheart, and in this way learned his address.

Ellen had become so reticent in her anxiety to see the young man, that jealousy prompted her to read those love missiles. This explains why Leonard never received any word from Merrill after she went to England.

One quiet moonlight evening, when the balmy breeze seemed to convey messages of love on its vibratory waves, Leonard crossed the fields on an errand of like nature. Emerging from isolated by-paths into the highway near the village post-office, he passively inquired for mail addressed to Leonard Lowell. He received a small package of letters among which was one stamped with the English postmark.

At the sight of the English stamp, his placid

composure gave place to abstraction, and his heart beat with increased animation. What a surprise was in store for him! Merrill had, indeed, written him a letter. Though couched in few words, it revealed the character of his charming classmate. It disclosed the fact, that Ellen Steuben had imposed upon his confidence during the entire time of their acquaintance.

At no time had Ellen ever intimated that she knew Merrill Mayo before she left England on this alleged trip for the benefit of her health. She had at all times left the impression on Leonard's mind, that all she knew about Merrill was what he had told her himself.

This letter conveyed the intelligence that Merrill had become acquainted with Ellen Steuben in England, and that Ellen had gone to America on account of failing health. She expressed a wish that Leonard might meet her while she was on the continent. She also sent a message of love to be delivered orally to Leonard should an opportunity present itself.

More than a year had elapsed since Ellen Steuben left England, and still no word had been received by Leonard from the friend of his childhood. Merrill's faith was ever constant during the time of her sojourn in England, for she loved as only a lass can love who had never loved before.

Merrill could not believe that Leonard would intentionally neglect to write regularly to her.

She even suspected that her letters had not been received, and decided to write once more. That letter reached its destination, for there was no jealous lover at the English post-office to intercept it.

When Leonard read the letter, his powers of discernment failed to interpret its meaning. He could hardly persuade himself to believe the declarations it contained. He resolved to see Miss Steuben at once and demand an explanation.

With the letter tightly clasped in his hand, he hastened to her home where he found her playing a love ditty on the mandolin.

Ellen went forward as usual to greet him, but drew back in dismay at sight of his tearful eyes. He thrust the letter into her hands. The color faded from her rosy cheeks. The madness of despair came over her, for she could not formulate any plausible defence of her conduct.

Realizing that her deception had been made known, she smote her breast in deep humility. Every attempt at explanation added confusion to her indiscretion.

What a wily web this novice lover had woven to be unwarily ensnared in its meshes. She had met the one she could love, only to realize her conquest was in vain. Her devotion had been lavished upon her ideal but to submerge her with desolation. The unalloyed pleasures of

the past few months had been purchased at too great a price.

Had Ellen Steuben anticipated interference of this nature, she might have been prepared to counteract its effects upon her best laid plans. So effulgent had been her enjoyment in Leonard's company, that she had permitted the moments to pass without considering that a day of retribution might come when least expected.

Passively she had wondered what would be the result should the Mayo family return while these conditions existed, but still continued to court friendly relations with little or no concern, trusting that, should the worst happen, she might employ such effrontery as the exigencies of the moment might suggest.

Ellen knew Leonard entertained for her more than mere passive friendship. He had made no declarations of love, yet she believed if they had been left alone, she would ultimately have succeeded in enticing him away from his childhood lover. Crestfallen and distracted, she pleaded for some consideration of approval of her conduct under such circumstances, and that he would not forsake her while thus burdened with sorrow.

Blinded by copious tears, which added charms to those she already possessed, she told Leonard, that had she loved him less, she never would have risked so much to establish herself in his friendship.

This inordinate desire for his companionship had its inception at the time when Merrill recited his many noble qualities to her in the quiet of the veranda at her own home in England.

Ellen reasoned that the only way to accomplish her purpose would be to prevent correspondence between them.

Having made full confession of all the wrongs committed against him, and with this plea in justification, she submitted her claims for his consideration, hoping that her entrenchment upon his good graces might possess sufficient reason to allay the sentiment which threatened her annihilation from his affection.

As Leonard gazed into those tearful eyes, and comprehended the anguish of soul into which the lovely damsel had precipitated herself, his heart was touched, for he was young and inexperienced in the ways of the jealous lover.

Between paroxysms of grief, she sought to obtain from him some assurance that she might still hope for a reconciliation. She had firmly resolved to test the adequacy of the love which had so mysteriously affected her existence since she first knew Leonard Lowell.

In order to learn more of the young man without arousing Merrill's suspicion, she had intercepted his letters. She believed that if correspondence could be prevented, they might forget their childhood pledge.

Ellen Steuben had traveled more than three thousand miles across the billowy ocean for the purpose of testing the potency of a love so effulgent in its dominion over the hearts of unsuspecting individuals. She realized her indiscretion, but still hoped that this estrangement might not be permanent. Her only purpose in attending that school was that she might have a favorable opportunity to test her powers of fascination upon the unsuspecting young man.

Leonard regarded her importunities with sympathetic consideration, when he learned how profound must be her admiration for him, and promised to remain her friend in the future.

Could he have glanced across the waters, and have seen a meek little maiden on bended knee, interceding with the Great Comforter, that Leonard might answer her last letter, if nothing more than to say that he still remembered her; could he have heard her pleading with her parents to return home, that she might again enjoy the pleasures of his presence, he might have been more discreet in making rash promises to a jealous rival lover.

When the soul of man becomes a prisoner to the seductive charms of angel types of human beings; when his will-power has lost its tension because of irresistible feminine charms; when his mind travels through the magic lanes and fairy woods of Love's dreamland, then is he

incapable of directing his own course with discretion, or of entering into sacred obligations.

Leonard had become so engrossed during this dramatic scene, that he yielded to her entreaties to a dangerous degree. During the awe-inspiring moments, a fervid idolatry seemed to possess his soul, and he forgot all about the tell-tale letter. He could not recall the incident further than, that he had placed it in her hands. He even neglected to notice the post mark that he might know her address.

Instead of profiting by the experience, Leonard permitted more artful deception to be practiced upon him while his mind was thus diverted from its usual placid composure.

When Ellen glanced over the letter she read, "In this last appeal to you," and stealthily concealed the note. She hoped this would prevent correspondence so long as Merrill remained beyond the confines of the great ocean. There existed in the young lady's heart, a combination of love and envy; love for Leonard Lowell, and envy for his youthful lover.

Gratification of any feeling is said to be pleasant. To anger, revenge is sweet. To love, possession is perpetual delight. Love begets a desire for the elevation of the person, and envy, a desire for humiliation.

The mind seems to be endowed with a faculty which antagonizes reciprocity in love affairs. Individuals often deviate so far from the paths

of rectitude as to seek revenge in cases of love turned to hatred.

How forceful is the sentiment expressed in the following words:

"Of all the sensibilities of mankind, there is no more powerful gift of God than love. There is no other attribute with which to compare it; not even with patience, generosity, or humility." "It is the culmination of all the better elements that constitute perfect beings, the focus of all the colors of the spectrum doubly magnified."

The Apostle Paul says: "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

CHAPTER IX.

We live in deeds, not in years; in thoughts, not
breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial;
We count time by heart throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.
—*Bailey.*

On Leonard's sixteenth birthday he received word from a solicitor in New York, that Leonard Lowell, a wealthy bachelor of that city, had died, leaving all his property, both real and personal, to his nephew and namesake. He expressed a desire to have an interview at once that the transfer might be made according to law.

It had been three years since Merrill Mayo went with her parents to England, since which time Leonard had developed into a young man of commanding appearance and military bearing.

Preparations were soon made for the trip to the city. In his haste to be off, he neglected to inform Ellen of his contemplated trip, or of his good fortune. He urged the coachman to

make all possible speed, and his efforts to do so, caused many a mishap from reckless driving over strange and rugged thoroughfares.

As they descended a narrow mountain pass, noted for its abrupt curves, the coachman sought to gain time by permitting the horses to advance in a sweeping trot.

All went well until they approached one of those narrow defiles in the highway. There they espied another team slowly ascending the hill. Neither party was apprised of the other's approach until too late to prevent the telescoping of the teams, unless by miraculous adventure.

On the one side was a jagged ledge of rocks towering high above their heads; on the other, a rugged hillside more than fifty feet to the valley below. Two of the passengers ascending the hill were ladies, and Leonard vowed to protect them at the risk of his own life. The teams were in close proximity and the danger was imminent. If anything could be done it must be done at once.

Leonard's conveyance had gained considerable momentum in descending the grade, and by a powerful effort, he surged the steeds over the embankment. Leonard and the coachman expected every moment to be dashed to pieces as the frightened steeds plunged down the dangerous declivity.

Providentially neither men nor horses were seriously injured by their perambulating de-

scent. The carriage, however, was completely demolished and had to be abandoned.

With straps of harness for stirrups, they mounted the horses and proceeded on the journey without waiting to receive the thanks of those for whom they had performed the dangerous feat.

Upon arriving at their destination, Leonard took hasty leave of his companion, and hastened to the dock where he last saw Merrill Mayo before she went on board that ponderous vessel. He seemed to have forgotten the object of his journey to the city, and stood gazing out over the great expanse of waters as if trying to reproduce the scenes of other days.

Vividly did he recall the occasion when he said "good-bye" to his little friend whose letters had been intercepted by a rival lover.

As he stood thus, coolly deliberate, gazing into the hazy atmosphere above the surface of the water, he did not observe the gathering gloom, as twilight announced the approach of night.

Darkness alone warned him of his unconscious meditation. Realizing his awkward position, he went in search of the solicitor who had written him concerning the estate. While at the solicitor's office he learned that all his uncle's wealth, consisting of stocks, bonds, houses and lands, amounting to more than fifty

thousand dollars, had been devised to him by the will of an uncle whom he had never seen.

Having explained in detail all matters pertaining to the estate, the solicitor was surprised to see that Leonard manifested but little interest in his good fortune. His stolid indifference in regard to the fortune puzzled this man of law, and he inquired of Leonard whether he understood what disposition his uncle had made of his immense wealth.

Now, Leonard was a sensible lad, and understood the nature of every bequest named in the will. He comprehended every provision as explained to him, but his soul went out after a greater treasure, one which money could not buy.

To relieve the stranger's curiosity, Leonard frankly told him that he would cheerfully give every dollar of the wealth so devised, if it would enable him to see Merrill Mayo again, as he had seen her there three years before, and to converse with her as he did on that occasion while waiting for the vessel to complete preparations for the voyage.

The solicitor became more deeply concerned at mention of Merrill Mayo's name. He began to comprehend the situation. He knew Merrill's father, and had often heard him speak of his daughter. It was he who advised Mr. Mayo to go to England to have corrections made in the

land titles before suit should be instituted by the contestants.

The strangers became interested in each other. Leonard was rejoiced to learn that his lawyer had known the Mayo family, and had corresponded with them since they went to England.

In those days navigation was in its infancy, and it required a much longer time to cross the ocean than it does at the present time. Improved shipping facilities, and more substantial armor plate protection, renders it more secure for passengers, and requires less time to cross the ocean than in former years.

Having explained the several provisions of the will, the solicitor informed Leonard that he had received a letter from Mr. Mayo in which he said they would start on the return trip next day and would reach home in about four months.

By reference to the calendar it was learned, that the time had already elapsed. Leonard again lost interest in his fortune and appeared to forget the object of his mission to the city. He proceeded to the pier to await the arrival of the vessel.

For three days and nights he wandered about among the ships anchored in the harbor, almost frantic with fear and hope. During all this time he would not taste food or nourishment of any kind.

No one can continue long in violation of nature's laws without suffering the penalty prescribed by her immutable statutes. The decree is established, and the punishment inevitable, as Leonard learned to his sorrow. He became weaker as the hours passed, and finally his strength failed and he became as helpless as a child.

Some dock hands made for him a pallet of straw where he lay for hours, unprotected from the chilly night winds and the dense fogs which envelop coast regions during certain portions of the year.

Not long after dark on the third night of this awful suspense, the Ocean Liner anchored in the harbor. Confusion reigned supreme as passengers were met by friends, and as strangers sought refuge for the night.

Many of those who landed saw Leonard as they passed to the shore, but not until Merrill Mayo approached did any one seem to notice his fainting condition. As she passed the cot on which the poor boy lay, a pitiful moan escaped his lips. She stood for a moment, her heart filled with pity for the helpless boy, wondering what misfortune had befallen him, when she heard her own name feebly spoken.

Even while his mind wandered in delirium, there existed communion of spirits, which led to his recognition.

A cab conveyed the young man to the Sayard

Hospital. Merrill pleaded so earnestly to be allowed to accompany him, that her parents granted her request. Day after day she remained at his bedside, a vigilant and faithful nurse.

CHAPTER X.

Better trust all and be deceived,
And weep that trust and that deceiving,
Than doubt one heart that, if believed,
Had blessed one's life with true believing.
—*Frances A. Kemble.*

Albert Gordon often wondered what people thought of his disappearance from the neighborhood in which he taught his first term of school in the Ohio Valley.

In disguise he returned to visit the scenes of his cabin home. As he approached the old schoolhouse, he was strangely affected by timidity and fear. Never before had he experienced sensations so realistic in their nature, nor had his courage ever appeared so uncertain.

He was not a coward, and yet it was with throbbing heart he entered to view the interior.

On the same old improvised black-board, which he had fastened to the moss-covered wall, there appeared in dim letters, "Good-bye, school-house." "Good-bye, my cabin home."

As he reclined by the old desk on which he had rapped many times for order, the pleasant

scenes of other years appeared as a vision before his mind. Past recollections flitted through his memory as he sat thus on the rustic seat.

The place seemed to be under a spell of enchantment. He remained momentarily absorbed in meditation, when the form of a beautiful damsel appeared, clothed in robes of celestial whiteness. He dared not move for fear the apparition would vanish. The features of this angelic being were those of Ethel Laxon.

Enraptured by the hallucination, he almost ceased to breathe. He feared Ethel's spirit had returned from that better land to haunt him for his insincerity while she lived in seclusion for his sake.

He never saw Ethel's features more clearly defined, nor her form more beautiful to behold. So life-like was the presentation, that he attempted to clasp her hand, and then,—she was gone.

He next went to the cabin to find that nothing had been disturbed during his absence. Even the rude wooden box in which he kept his most important papers, had not been molested. He collected Ethel's letters, enclosed them in crepe and placed them next to his heart.

With a farewell to the schoolhouse and to his cabin home, he departed with the avowed intention of seeking new fields of conquest in a foreign clime.

With this object in view, he went to the city

of New York, and while waiting for a vessel to convey him across the briny deep, the Ocean Liner arrived in port with the Mayo family on board. He saw the helpless form of Leonard Lowell taken to the hospital. Being much concerned in the lad's welfare, he decided to remain long enough to learn the result of his illness.

Circumstances often vary conditions, when those affected by the change are ignorant of its manifestations. Albert Gordon called every day to inquire about Leonard's condition, and every time a pale-faced, flaxen-haired nurse appeared to answer his inquiries.

She not only manifested concern in Leonard's illness, but lingered to inquire concerning Mr. Gordon's own health and happiness. Though dressed in the garb of a nurse, she seemed to have general control in all departments of the institution. She could serve in any capacity from amateur nurse to that of general superintendent.

One day when Albert called as usual, the young lady appeared so friendly that he ventured to ask her name and whether she had always lived in the city. This undue familiarity embarrassed her, for of her former life she did not care to speak.

Disappointed at her own strange conduct, she entered the building leaving Albert standing at the outer door.

Mr. Gordon could not comprehend the mean-

ing of her singular conduct. It was plain that the young lady was quivering with impatience and half mad with excitement. He feared his imprudence might prevent further opportunities to inquire of her concerning his young friend's convalescence.

When she appeared next morning, it was with face heavily veiled.

Leonard lay for months at the point of death, so deep-seated was the illness occasioned by his ruthless exposure. Greatest skill then known to the medical profession seemed to avail nothing, and had it not been for the determined efforts of sympathetic attendants, assisted by Merrill Mayo, he never would have rallied from the shock brought on by his imprudence.

Merrill was compelled to resign the trust to care for her own enfeebled condition. Many a time had she remained in Leonard's room, reclining in an invalid's chair, when she should have been resting upon her own easy couch at home. Leonard had not experienced a lucid moment since the inception of his illness.

It became a matter of increasing moment with Mr. Gordon, as he continued his visits to the institution. He availed himself of every opportunity to spend a few moments with the matron, whose affected speech reminded him of the one whose love he had forfeited by his unintentional wounding of her already broken heart. Her trained indifference and perfectly

careless air never failed to produce desired results.

An invisible power pervaded the very atmosphere while she was in his presence. He could not think of crossing the ocean while these conditions existed. His desire for travel abated.

For some unknown reason he preferred to remain in the city, that he might prolong his visits at the hospital. The time thus spent passed so quickly, that he scarcely realized he had been in her presence. Her personality made him a willing prisoner to the plastic influence which swayed his will power at pleasure.

As the leaves rustle with the changing breeze, so Albert Gordon's resolutions were subject to vacillations.

One day as he stood transfixed in her presence, the matron invited him to enter Leonard's room. There he saw his former pupil with mind as passive as that of a little babe. He endeavored to attract Leonard's attention, but failed until he took from his pocket a photograph and asked if he knew the lady's name.

Leonard smiled as he was wont to smile in other years, and, in childlike simplicity, pointed toward the matron. In quick succession thoughts of a familiar face flitted through Albert Gordon's mind. Could it be possible that the matron was the person from whom that picture was made? What a miracle had the photograph performed?

When Albert Gordon so far recovered from the surprise as to look in the direction indicated by Leonard's uplifted hand, the lady was gone. Silently and mysteriously she had vanished as an apparition at mid-day. Her conduct on this occasion was like that of Ethel Laxon's when Albert Gordon proposed a postponement of the wedding day.

Every department of the institution was searched. The detective force of the city endeavored to discover her place of concealment, but she had made good her escape.

Dr. Sayard had often said her presence in the sick room proved more beneficial to his patients, than any medicine he could administer. He, too, believed some mystery enveloped her life. He had thought many times he would inquire of her, but had neglected to do so until it was too late.

Perhaps she had been the victim of some foul treachery of which she would not care to speak. Now that she was gone, he was sorry he had not learned something of her life's history.

The photograph which had aroused Leonard's dormant sensibilities, was sent to Merrill Mayo, and she recognized it as the likeness of the matron, and also of—Ethel Laxon.

A higher than human agency must have influenced the lives of those concerned in Leonard Lowell's welfare. Merrill and the matron had been together a great deal of the time. Espe-

cially was this true in the room where their mutual friend lay sick. Yet there was no sign of recognition until the photograph was presented to his view.

CHAPTER XI.

Oh! what avail the largest gifts of heaven,
When drooping health and spirits go amiss?
How tasteless then whatever can be given!
Health is the vital principle of bliss.

—*Horace Mann.*

It will be remembered, that when Albert Gordon asked Ethel Laxon to postpone the wedding, she disappeared from his presence like the mist before the morning sun. For a time she traveled as an agent selling staple articles which could be sold at almost every household. While thus engaged she wandered into the city of New York.

Sitting alone one evening in the twilight, her delicate fingers toying with the laced curtains by the windows, she picked up a daily paper. Glancing over its pages she saw an advertisement for nurses at the Sayard Hospital. Being dissatisfied with the work as agent, she applied for a position. Not willing to risk the routine method of written application, she applied in person.

The demand for help was so urgent, that no

questions were asked, and she was installed as a nurse at good wages. Fearing that letters of recommendation might be required, she had prepared a few, attaching to each a fictitious signature, but they did not even ask her name.

Ethel had not served long in the capacity of nurse until the matron resigned to take effect at once. So well had Ethel discharged the duties as a subordinate, that she was promoted to the position of matron.

What an opportunity was thus afforded for a busy life, one which would enable her, in a measure, to forget her own sorrows in efforts to promote the happiness of others? Her presence was an inspiration, and her labors invaluable in promoting the best interests of the unfortunate inmates.

Employees of the institution were allowed a few hours each day for recreation, and most of them made good use of the opportunity. Ethel spent most of her time in comforting the unfortunate sick. She believed in the sentiment of the poet as expressed in these lines:

“Drop a word of cheer and kindness, just a
flash and it is gone,
But there’s half a hundred ripples circling on
and on and on,
Bearing hope and joy and comfort on each
splashing dashing wave,

Till you wouldn't believe the volume of the one kind word you gave."

The following beautiful lines by Margaret E. Sangster, also expresses the same forceful sentiment:

"Live in the sunshine, don't live in the gloom,
Carry some gladness the world to illumine.
Live in the brightness, and take this to heart,
The world will be gayer if you'll do your part."

A feeling of sadness permeated every department at the hospital, when it was known that the matron had left the premises and could not be found. No one else would have been more sadly missed, not even physicians and surgeons, whose duties required dangerous and delicate operations. The varied experiences of the life she had lived, had so eminently fitted her for the work, that none could be found to fill her place.

Leonard's physical condition improved slowly, and he was soon able to walk about the premises. Friends who believed much in vigorous, healthful exercise, often took him to the country, that he might receive the benefit of purer atmosphere, free from adulterations of smoke from factories, and reflected heat from city buildings.

The physicians observed marked convales-

cence in Leonard's physical condition, but were at a loss to understand why his mental powers were not also restored. No parallel case had ever come under their observation, nor could a similar one be found in the medical books.

When Merrill was compelled to return home to care for her own delicate health, she endeavored to persuade the superintendent to allow her to take Leonard to her country home, that she might still have the pleasure of his presence, though not yet restored in mind. Her request could not be granted, for it would deprive him of constant medical attention which was necessary to hasten his recovery.

Ellen Steuben had also learned of Leonard's illness at the hospital, and that Merrill had gone home. She had not abandoned her purpose of enticing him away from his first love. Accordingly she went to the hospital, introduced herself as Leonard's sister, and offered to assist in nursing him while he remained for further treatment.

Her generous offer was accepted without comment. Under this arrangement she and Leonard were permitted to spend a great deal of time together. They would ramble over vast areas of territory adjacent to the hospital grounds.

They always returned on time, and no suspicion was aroused of any impropriety in allowing them this privilege.

Ellen was all the while planning to take the

young man on board a vessel to convey him to her home across the waters. She was determined, if possible, to prevent another meeting of the young people.

Having formulated plans for the purpose, she only waited for an opportunity to carry them into execution.

While she and Leonard were at the seashore, one afternoon, she wondered why they might not go on board at once, and thus make sure of her charge. With this object in view, she purchased transportation for two persons to Liverpool, England.

When the tickets were purchased, she did not think to inquire when the next vessel would sail for the British Isles. Possessed of a nervous temperament, she could not control her emotions when she learned that no other vessel would leave the port for four-and-twenty hours.

The delay might frustrate all her plans. She had promised to return with Leonard, not later than five o'clock, and the lengthening shadows already indicated that the day was rapidly drawing to a close. The situation was a perplexing one and extremely embarrassing.

As the twilight enveloped the city, and the golden-tinted arch in the western horizon glowed with the last rays of the setting sun, Ellen left her ward and went in search of accommodations at some isolated inn.

Fear of detection added to her discomposure.

The tension of her over-wrought nerves increased at the thought of all manner of reports which might be circulated because of her strange conduct. She hesitated to take Leonard to a public hotel for fear of detection.

While Ellen Steuben was on this mission, another scene was being enacted. In her haste to procure the tickets, Ellen failed to observe that another lady was in the office, who heard all that was said about the trip across the ocean. She was partially concealed by some articles of furniture when Ellen entered.

The other lady was none other than Ethel Laxon. She had never left the city after her mysterious disappearance from the hospital, but had procured rooms near the wharf, that she might observe what transpired in that locality.

She had been successful in eluding the detectives, and became more venturesome every day. Ethel recognized Leonard at sight, but had never seen his companion. She was quick to observe that Leonard had not yet been restored to his right mind, and, of course, not accountable for his actions. Evidently she was surprised to see him there accompanied by a stranger.

Considering what was said to the agent, and also the lady's extreme nervousness, Ethel believed that an effort was being made to place

the young man on board a vessel while he was yet incapable of volition in any sense.

Although Ethel knew the detectives were devoting much valuable time to the one object of finding her and turning her over to the hospital authorities, she vowed to protect the helpless lad at the risk of being detected. Accordingly she took him by the hand, as she would have taken the hand of a child, and conducted him to her apartments.

Ethel knew the city well, and could venture out at any time of day or night with comparative safety. More than once she had passed members of the detective force, as she walked about the streets, but had always succeeded in eluding them.

On one occasion, when about to be identified, she asked them to direct her to a reputable hotel. As a result of this ruse, she was permitted to pass on unmolested.

Having provided Leonard a comfortable couch upon which to sleep, she repaired to the dock to await developments. She did not have long to wait. Scarcely had she concealed herself when Ellen entered and inquired whether any one had seen a young man about the premises. She described Leonard as best she could without referring to his condition.

Resolved to learn more of her intention, Ethel said she had seen a lad wandering about the building, and had spoken to him, but he

would not so much as bid her the time of day. She also said that some men wearing a kind of uniform had taken the lad away with them.

Of course this was not true, but it had the desired effect, for with an exclamation of surprise, she left without so much as thanking Ethel for the information. Ethel then returned to her rooms to find Leonard sleeping as sweetly as if nothing had transpired to mar the tranquillity of the closing day.

Next morning, as the sun's rays peeped out over the hilltops and cast their beams of golden light into the valleys below, Leonard awoke from his slumbers. Gazing about the room, his curiosity was aroused at sight of some photographs on the mantel. Two of the pictures were like the one which had impressed him for an instant at the hospital, though he did not know it, and another he recognized as Merrill Mayo's favorite photograph of herself.

Leonard had no recollection of having seen any of the photographs since he left home, yet there existed a vague impression on his mind, that, somewhere, at some time within the past few months, Ethel's picture had been placed in his hands.

As he gazed upon the familiar faces on that beautiful May morning, reason returned, if, indeed, it had not already been restored during the peaceful hours of the night, and with it, the power of speech. He could not recall anything

that transpired since he went to the dock to await the arrival of the vessel.

Surprised at finding himself so pleasantly situated, without any knowledge of having engaged rooms there, he gave vent to his emotions by an exclamation of surprise. Ethel had prepared the morning meal, and was waiting for some signs of life in his room, that she might have an excuse to enter, and when she heard his voice, with a glad shout she rushed into the room and embraced him in her arms.

CHAPTER XII.

Were half the power that fills the world with
terror,
Were half the wealth bestowed on camp and
courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no need of arsenals and forts.
—*Longfellow.*

In 1856, James Buchanan was elected President of the United States. At that time slavery existed in most of the Southern States, and the colored people were sold, bartered and traded as articles of commerce.

Sometimes the husband and father would be sold and driven from the wife and children. The son and daughter might fare likewise as the result of a sale of slaves. A good many people believed that slavery was a curse to the country and should be abolished. This great question was being agitated by all classes of individuals.

As early as 1820, the South believed that Congress had no right to interfere with the slavery traffic. They believed that each State

had the power to settle matters of this nature for itself.

On the contrary, the North believed that Congress had the power and the right to regulate conditions to be observed by the States individually and collectively.

When Henry Clay was Speaker of the House of Representatives, Missouri was admitted as a slave State on condition, acquiesced in by both Houses of Congress, that in the future, slavery should be prohibited in territory north of a certain degree of north latitude.

About a year before Mr. Buchanan became President of the United States, the case of Dred Scott, a slave who had been taken into free territory by his owner and, while there, claimed his freedom, was appealed from the United States Courts to the Supreme Court. This tribunal of highest resort rendered its decision against Scott, and this created great indignation in the North, because it upheld the views entertained by the South in almost all respects.

It should be remembered, that the court before which the case was first tried, decided in Scott's favor. On appeal, the Supreme Court of Missouri reversed the decision of the lower court, and Scott was again sold as a slave, together with his family. The case went to the United States Courts, and finally in 1855, to the Supreme Court, where it remained about two years when the decision was rendered

against Scott. His owner finally set him free of his own accord.

No more momentous question ever came before the American people. The ablest constitutional lawyers of the land claimed that such traffic was not in violation of any provisions of the Constitution.

A good many citizens protested against slavery in any form, and were trying to devise some means by which the slaves might be freed from bondage. These good people believed that the slaves were susceptible to education, and were ignorant only because they were deprived of privileges along educational lines.

A man by the name of John Brown went so far as to attempt to liberate them from this condition of servitude and subjection. His ardent zeal prompted him to oppose the Government in their behalf. Having mustered out a small company of brave men, he attacked the State Arsenal at Harper's Ferry.

John Brown's Fort, which originally stood in the town of Harper's Ferry, was taken to the World's Fair at Chicago, and when returned to West Virginia, was placed on a high promontory a few miles out from the town of Harper's Ferry, overlooking the Shenandoah River.

We learn from history that the whole nation became alarmed at Brown's intrepidity, and that State troops were sent to the scene from Charles Town, Martinsburg and other points,

and a detachment of United States Marines from Washington.

The spectacle was an imposing one. The troops demanded unconditional surrender. It was not until after the insurgents refused to surrender, that the troops proceeded to attack them in their stronghold.

In this unfortunate conflict between Government troops and the insurgents, a number of brave men were killed and several wounded. Among those who were killed were two of Brown's brave sons. Mr. Brown, himself, was wounded, but rallied and was taken prisoner. It is not known how many of the insurgents escaped, but most of them were captured.

The Constitution of the United States defines treason as follows:

"Treason against the United States shall consist in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies giving them aid and comfort."

It thus appears, that all who took part in the insurrection were guilty of treason. The indictment against Brown charged treason and murder.

Mr. Brown was given a fair and impartial trial according to the laws governing extreme criminal cases of this character. The judge of the Criminal Court appointed able counsel to defend the prisoner. There being no justification for the rash act, he was found guilty as

charged in the indictment, and sentenced to be hanged.

A man's own convictions often prompt him to judge too severely those who commit gross violations of his country's laws, no matter what motives prompt the commission of the deed.

Mr. Brown was a respected and honored citizen. He had become prominent as an anti-slavery man. His integrity and his bravery had made him a leader in the border warfare which waged for several years in his own State and in Missouri. He possessed many noble qualities of mind and heart, and one should pass upon his condemnation with some degree of leniency.

While he was yet a citizen of Kansas, he formulated ideas of slave liberation. He believed that this could be accomplished by arming the slaves and inciting them to revolt against their owners. He believed the slaves would be willing to fight for their freedom, but not more than half a dozen, perhaps, had the courage to join Brown's company. Their failure to do so caused his consequent and speedy downfall.

This story relates, that among those who fought with the insurgents, was a brave young officer who seemed to defy death at the hands of the troops. No one knew whence he came or why he risked his life in so hopeless a cause.

When he saw his brave leader fall, mortally wounded, as he thought, and his followers dis-

persed in every direction, he sought shelter in an old house not far from the scene of the conflict.

Being well supplied with ammunition, and having taken a few extra guns from his fallen comrades, he barred the door and fought desperately against the troops, until he saw smoke ascending and flames bursting through the roof. The house was on fire.

Although he had no fears of death, he decided to surrender and to seek an opportunity to effect his escape when not surrounded by so many determined soldiers.

He was placed in prison, where he remained until the night before Brown's execution. Having learned that the insurgents would be punished by death, he determined to obtain his freedom. Observing that a single soldier was left to guard the prison, he feigned insanity in a violent form. By wild gesticulations he so frightened the guard, who did not deem it wise to shoot the prisoner under such circumstances, that he beat a hasty retreat, leaving him free for a time to go where he pleased.

In rambling about in search of some means of escape, he discovered a suit of clothes like those worn by the State troops. For this uniform he exchanged his old garments and glided through the door unperceived. In this disguise he witnessed the hanging of his comrade next day, and then left for parts unknown.

When the guard returned with men to confine the maniac, he found his prisoner had fled. In rifling the pockets of the old suit which he had exchanged for the new uniform, they found several letters, signed, "Ethel Laxon," all of which were addressed to "Albert Gordon."

CHAPTER XIII.

Many a shaft at random sent,
Finds mark the archer little meant!
And many a word at random spoken,
May soothe, or wound, a heart that's broken.
—*Scott.*

As Ethel Laxon slept that night after having foiled Ellen Steuben's attempt to decoy Leonard on board the vessel, she dreamed he awoke next morning restored in mind and body, and when she heard his voice she rushed into the room to find that her dream had come true. Her mind had soared beyond the dial of the sun, and she was permitted to see, in advance, the young man perfectly rational in every sense.

Leonard was disconcerted by the cordial reception accorded him. He had not yet learned that he was Ethel Laxon's guest. He recognized her the moment she entered the room, but did not understand how he came to be there and alone with her.

At no other time during their acquaintance had she been so profuse in her exultations of joy, and he wondered why on this occasion, she

gave vent to her emotions by affectionate demonstrations. No brother and sister were ever more rejoiced to see each other after years of separation, than were Ethel Laxon and Leonard Lowell on that beautiful morning.

Ethel was elated to hear Leonard talk so sensibly. She feared the result might be only a freak of his peculiar malady. But after conversing with him on various topics, she perceived that he was perfectly restored. Referring to the trip to the city, Leonard related the substance of his interview with the solicitor concerning the will by which he became the owner of his uncle's fortune.

He told Ethel about the letter which Mr. Mayo had written to the solicitor, in which he expressed his intention of returning home soon. He remembered of going to the dock to await the arrival of the vessel, but beyond that, all was blank to him.

He did not know that the Mayo family had returned, nor that he had been at the hospital for treatment. Neither did he know that Ethel had seen him there, or anywhere else, since her mysterious disappearance when Albert Gordon innocently suggested a postponement of the wedding day.

Ethel doubted the wisdom of informing him of his timely rescue from a trip across the ocean. She realized the delicate responsibility which

devolved upon her, and preferred to let him learn of conditions from other source.

Of one thing she was certain; she would be compelled to offer some excuse for isolating herself from the world. Before doing so, she exacted from him a promise not to reveal her identity without first obtaining permission from her. He would not countenance her evasion. His curiosity was excited and he pleaded for further information.

Ethel could not resist his entreaties, and at last told him that Merrill Mayo had returned from England and was at home with her parents.

Upon receiving this intelligence, no manner of persuasion could pacify his emotions. With profuse thanks for her kindness, he started for the station intending to go at once to Merrill's home. On the way to the depot he met the solicitor, and from him learned a great deal more than Ethel had told him.

A careful diagnosis of Leonard's illness had elicited much comment among the learned doctors, and they evinced a deep interest in the case, not because of his personality alone, but in the interest of medical science.

Many valuable discoveries in medicine have resulted from research, when some new or peculiar disease has made its appearance.

Believing that much good would result to his brethern in the profession, by a thorough in-

vestigation of the malady which thus affected the young man, Dr. Sayard had offered a large reward for his return to the institution. Similar inducements were offered for information which would result in finding the matron.

With a view to obtaining further knowledge of his own experience during the time his mind was absent from the body, Leonard and his solicitor went to the hospital, hoping to establish a chain of evidence which might result in disclosing all the facts and circumstances connected with it.

Dr. Sayard was rejoiced to see Leonard returning of his own free will, while Leonard was profoundly impressed to learn that he was primarily the cause of the disturbed conditions which prevailed. In consequence of what had already been divulged, and in anticipation of more startling revelations, the reward was promptly paid to the solicitor.

The proverbial moralist might question the moral feature of this transaction, for Leonard returned of his own volition, while the solicitor simply accompanied him for the purpose of guarding his legal rights.

The fact that the young man had but recently become wealthy, was sufficient reason for suspicion. What could be the young lady's motive in attempting to spirit him away to foreign lands unless for the purpose of obtaining possession of his wealth. Under the circumstances

it was deemed wise to retain additional counsel that a thorough investigation might be had.

Perhaps for this reason the reward was paid, for nothing creates within the breast of an attorney a greater enthusiasm than the payment of a substantial fee.

When Leonard heard the story of the man who manifested so great concern for his welfare, and who had become deeply interested in the matron, he comprehended the situation. And when he learned that the stranger was the same man who had presented the photograph for his recognition, at the time the matron disappeared, he reasoned that Ethel Laxon and the matron were one and the same person.

Determined to test the accuracy of his conclusions, Leonard returned to Ethel's apartments and related all he had heard about himself, and about the stranger in whom she had manifested more than a casual interest. She acted her part well for a time, but Leonard's process of reasoning was so convincing that she finally confessed to having recognized the man as Albert Gordon, for whom she had searched so long, and suffered so much.

Anxious as she was to learn what had become of Mr. Gordon after the photograph played so important a part in the drama, Ethel would not inquire for fear it might endanger her seclusion.

From one of the nurses she learned of his

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intention to enlist as a soldier in the Confederate army in case war should be declared.

Leonard pleaded with her to discard the disguise and to reveal herself. He reasoned that it would be utter folly to isolate herself longer. He begged to be allowed to collect the reward offered for her return, and to place the whole amount in her possession.

But money considerations had no more influence over her, than had Leonard's sudden acquisition of wealth over him while his soul yearned for a treasure not valued in dollars and cents.

It was finally agreed that Leonard might reveal everything, not for the sake of the reward, but that she might again be free to prosecute further search for her absent friend.

As they approached the hospital, Dr. Sayard went out to meet them. So perfect had been Ethel's disguise, that, when she returned, stripped of the mask, not even those with whom she had labored for months, were able to recognize her.

A wonderful transformation had taken place since she had left them a short time before, and even a greater change had taken place in Leonard Lowell's appearance since he was spirited away by his alleged "sister."

Leonard introduced Ethel by her right name, and there was a season of rejoicing. An effort was made to persuade her again to assume the

duties of matron, but she would not be persuaded. Her mind was made up to travel with the army of the South, and this desire was confirmed when Dr. Sayard gave out the information that he had offered his services as a surgeon to the Confederate cause, and would need nurses who were willing to risk their lives on fields of battle.

Among those who offered their services as nurses in the War of the Rebellion, were Dorothy Dix and Clara Barton. Miss Dix was superintendent of hospital nurses while the war lasted, and after its close she spent a great deal of time in efforts to improve conditions in hospitals and asylums.

Miss Barton was educated in the schools of the State of New York, and taught school for a few years. It was she who founded the first free school at Bordentown, New Jersey, a few years before the Civil War. She was at one time appointed a clerk in the Department of Patents at Washington, but resigned the position that she might give all her time to nursing wounded soldiers in the hospitals and on battlefields.

Dr. Sayard undertook to dissuade Ethel from her purpose, for he did not think she was physically able to perform the duties, or to endure the exposure incident to labors of that kind. But her mind was settled on the question.

She did not believe that anything would subvert her resolution with disastrous results.

Nothing is more certain than facts made known through physical, or other external forces incited to action by the influence of kindred spirits.

Ethel claimed she had learned in a vision, that Albert Gordon would be wounded in battle, and that greatest skill and careful nursing alone would save his life. Whether or not forebodings of this character should be regarded as tokens from the spirit world, is left for the reader to determine according to his own peculiar beliefs in Divine revelations.

Ethel Laxon intended to make herself known to Albert Gordon while yet at the hospital, and only waited for a favorable opportunity to do so. She longed for the time to come when she could be alone with him without attracting public notice. She wished to commune with him again as they had often done amid the clover blossoms and the wild flowers in the valley.

Ethel feared his scrutinizing gaze might pierce the mask at any moment. No matter how careless she feigned to be, or how reserved she tried to be while in his presence, she was tempted to throw herself into his arms and thereby relieve the intolerable suspense.

Consequently her grief was inconsolable when Leonard's innocent smile thwarted her purpose. She might never see him again.

Merrill Mayo had been at home a few weeks,

and had become somewhat reconciled to the situation, when, one evening, as the golden tint on the arch of the horizon, and the western sunset presented a golden hue, as the twilight faded into darkness, while reclining at her favorite window, gazing into the blue canopy of the heavens, she saw a stately form emerge from the woodbine near the garden gate.

Impulsively she ran out to meet,—Leonard Lowell.

CHAPTER XIV.

What stronger breast-plate than a heart untainted?

Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just;
And he but naked, though lock'd in steel,
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.

—*Shakespeare.*

Abraham Lincoln had not long occupied the Presidential chair when the people of the North and those of the South engaged in deadly conflict. South Carolina withdrew from the Union. Other states soon followed her example, and war waged in all its fury.

At the first battle of Bull Run, a brave young officer fought on the side of the Confederacy. He seemed to lead a charmed life and fought with desperation. No stronghold was too well fortified for him to attack, and no fortress too impregnable for his company to penetrate.

With unrestrained impetuosity he rushed to the front to rescue a fallen comrade, when a minnie ball pierced his outer garments, and lodged against a photograph in his pocket.

It was afterward learned that the bullet spent

its force against the same photograph that aroused Leonard Lowell's perceptive powers, for an instant, from prolonged inactivity.

On another occasion, as the armies surged to and fro in deadly conflict, he dashed forward to prevent the mutilation of the flag, when the premature discharge of a cannon so wounded him that his comrades left him with the dead.

His soldiers knew him as Captain Selvey. Of his life's history they knew nothing, except that no braver soldier ever engaged in battle.

The student of history will remember, that a few days before the people of Virginia were to vote upon the question of secession, the capital of the Confederate States was moved from Montgomery to Richmond, and that immediately the cry of the North was, "On to Richmond." General Scott, of the United States Army, was opposed to any such attempt, with raw troops who had been in the service only a short time, but no credence was given to his opinion.

The people of the North believed the war would soon be terminated, and consequently became impetuous and fool-hardy. Even Secretary Seward predicted that the war would be ended in about three months. The first battle of Bull Run, in which it is alleged Captain Selvey was wounded, was well-planned and well-executed until Confederate re-enforce-

ments arrived. Then the tide turned, and Union defeat became certain.

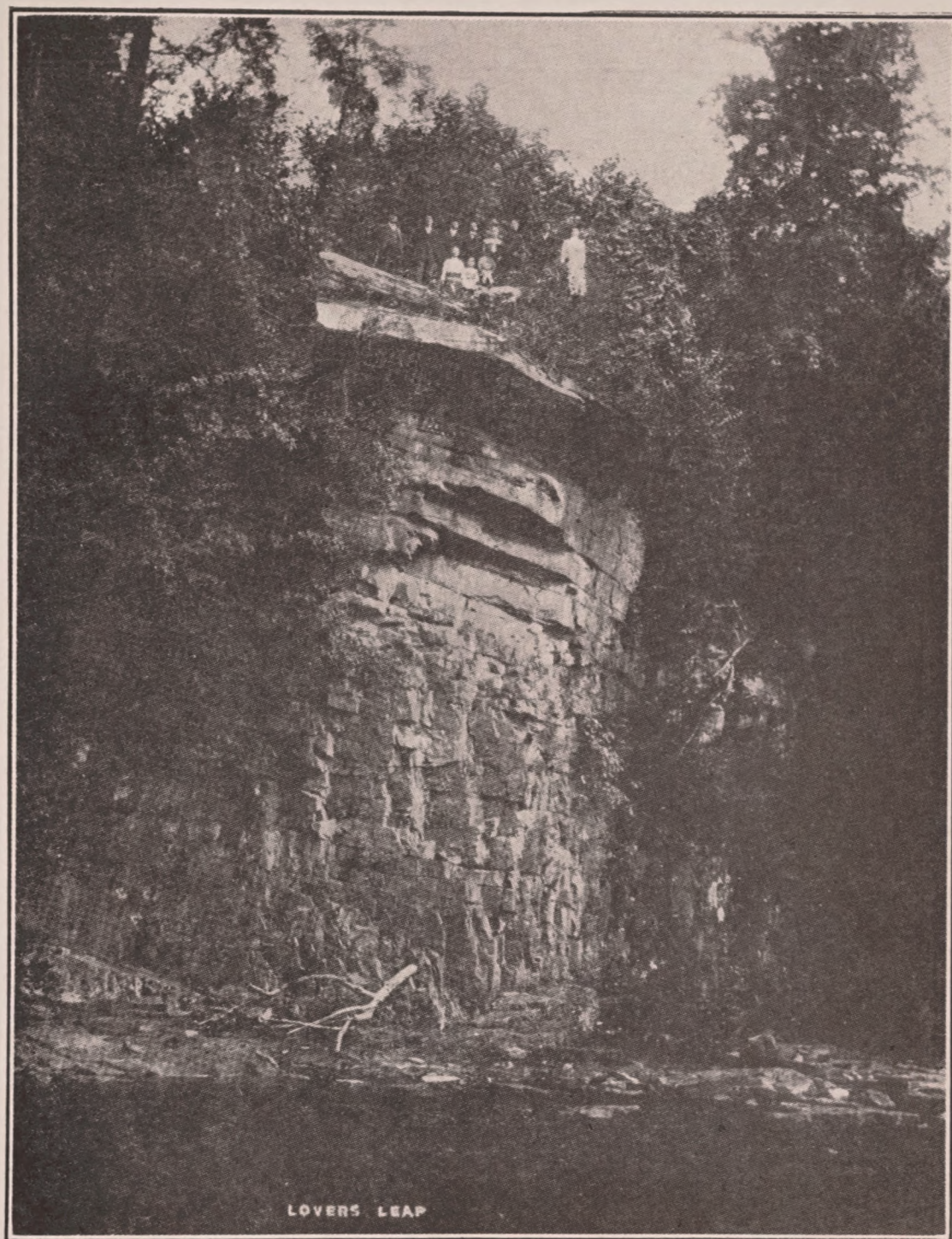
As Captain Selvey lay upon the blood-stained battle-field, praying that death might speedily sever the ties which yet bound him to earth, he witnessed the burial of hundreds of his comrades, as their bodies were thrown into trenches and covered with mother earth.

A subordinate approached with the intention of placing his body with others in that improvised grave, when he saw signs of life and passed it by. The suffering man was left for hours on the damp, cold ground with no one to pity or comfort him.

The contact of his body with the cool moisture of the earth strengthened his enfeebled condition so that he entertained some hope of recovery. He discovered that he could move one hand slightly, and raise his head from the ground. Inspired by returning vitality, he no longer prayed for the separation of soul and body, but that his life might be spared.

During these perilous moments, he recalled the scenes of the cabin home, and of his labors in the schoolroom. He remembered those momentous seasons of joy when he and Ethel Laxon had been completely happy in the enviable society of lovers.

While he lay thus in a semi-sensitive tremor, waiting for the messenger of death to transport him to the better land, sounds of a feminine



Lover's Leap Rock near Webster Springs, W. Va., on which the author stood with his wife and little boy in 1906.

(Facing page 106.)

voice reached his ear. In his mangled condition, he regarded this as a token of speedy dissolution. Gazing intently into the darkness, he espied a womanly form approaching.

In quick succession, thoughts of a future state flitted through his mind. He wondered whether he had not already crossed over death's barriers into that land where lovely beings dwell, clothed in feminine beauty, and where angels administer to suffering humanity.

Why should a woman elect to wander about over the battlefield in the dismal hours of the night? This angel of mercy advanced as if following a well-known by-path, and knelt at his side. By the dim light of the stars she moistened his lips. He still lived. He tried to speak but could not utter a sound.

She lighted a small lantern which always hung at her side during these nightly visits over gruesome battlefields, and by its faint glow, gazed into the haggard countenance of the suffering soldier.

Her heart sank as her eyes pierced the gloom in efforts to recognize the dying man. He was yet conscious, and understood all she said perfectly, but could not utter a word in reply.

The only way he could make his wants known was by signs. He beckoned for her to take something from his pocket. With throbbing heart she took therefrom an envelope. By similar methods he asked her to place a lead pencil in

his hand. When this was done, he wrote in fairly legible characters the name, "Ethel Laxon."

Ethel had endured many hardships since her allegiance with the army. She had often risked her life on fields of carnage and bloodshed, in trying to save the lives of wounded and dying soldiers. But to see, by the dim light of the lantern, her own name written by a stranger, as he lay apparently dying in the darkness, was more than her courage could endure, and she fell fainting at his side.

As the first beams of light stretched out over the landscape, dispelling the dismal gloom, a pitiful moan escaped her lips as she lifted her voice in prayer to the Arbiter of Fate, that the dying soldier's life might be saved. His life-blood had continued to ebb away while she lay unconscious in his presence. He could no longer lift his head from the earthen pillow. She feared it was too late to learn his name, or by what revelation he knew her as "Ethel Laxon."

Again she read the handwriting on the envelope. There could be no mistake. It was her own name plainly written. Glancing at the address on the envelope she saw the name, Captain Selvey. How could Captain Selvey identify her in the dread darkness on the field of battle? She had been with the army since the bombardment of Fort Sumter, but had never heard of Captain Selvey. Even if she

had heard of him, he would not have known her as "Ethel Laxon."

Having so far recovered as to be able to make some effort to relieve his suffering, she hastened to the brook for water to quench his awful thirst, with the hope that he might yet speak before death should claim him as its victim.

Having bathed his powder-stained face, she observed that a wonderful transformation had taken place. The revelations of her former vision, in reality, permitted her to gaze into the face, not of Captain Selvey, but of Albert Gordon.

Ethel had become accustomed to army life, and had frequently carried wounded soldiers off the battle-field. Realizing that prompt action alone might yet save his life, with her own hands she wrapped his army coat about him and carried him to headquarters more than half a mile away.

Upon examination it was found that his wounds were not necessarily fatal, but that with proper treatment and most careful nursing, he might live.

It can be truthfully said, that no other wounded soldier ever received treatment more effectively administered, than did Albert Gordon as he lingered between life and death at the improvised hospital on the battle-field.

Ethel Laxon had the wounded man taken to the Sayard Hospital that everything known to

the medical profession might be done to hasten his recovery. Long exposure to the elements had aggravated his wounds and made his case more serious than it would otherwise have been.

Ethel left the society of army nurses to be ever present to administer to the demands of her soldier lover.

Since Ethel had served a term of years as nurse and matron at the Sayard Hospital, when her patient so far recovered that all her time was not needed in his case, she again assumed responsibility as matron.

One's own gloomy feelings may often be dispelled by trying to help some one else.

Her services in this capacity were of sufficient value to compensate for the medical attention to Albert Gordon, and since they were both without funds, it was a matter of grave importance with them.

They no longer entertained any hope that her father would ever change his mind. Still more discouraging was the fact, that she might be disinherited, and would not receive any part of her father's wealth.

CHAPTER XV.

Like leaves on trees the race of man is found,
Now green in youth, now withering in the
ground;

Another race the following spring supplies;
They fall successive, and successive rise.

—*Homer's Iliad.*

Mr. Laxon owned immense tracts of land, and had extensive investments in salt production in the Kanawha Valley in West Virginia. Long before the various tribes of Indians frequented the "licks" at Campbell's Creek, his ancestors claimed shadow of title to large boundaries of land in that section.

There is a difference between claim of title and color of title, as will be observed by the distinction made by a prominent West Virginia law writer:

"Color of title is that which has the semblance of title, but which is, in fact, no title, and is anything in writing however deficient or imperfect purporting to convey title to the land, and which defines the extent of the claim."

"A claim of title may exist without any

written or other documentary evidence of title. It may be simply an entry under a parole agreement or understanding, or without any writing except the claim to enter upon the premises as the absolute property of the disseizor. But unless the boundaries of the land entered upon under a claim of title, when there is no writing, are marked and held in actual possession to the extent of such boundary, the claimant having no paper giving color of title, can only hold to the extent of his actual enclosure or improvement."

It is not known just how Mr. Laxon procured what he claimed to be a good title to the estates mentioned.

The historian says, that Indians often compelled their captives to manufacture salt for them at this point, while they rested from depredations committed in other localities.

One of the most effective methods of separating the salt solution from other substances, was the use of hollow logs forced endways into the quicksand imbedded in the earth. In this manner salt water was procured for the boiling process. Tedious as this method seemed to be, one person who understood the process, could manufacture more than one hundred pounds of salt in twenty-four hours.

A good many people yet remember the pack-saddle method of salt transportation, when the

indispensible commodity was carried for miles into settled portions of the country.

Some time before the civil war, some farmers residing on Freemans Creek, in Lewis County, West Virginia, went to the locality of this salt production for the purposes of procuring a supply for home consumption. In those days salt was so economically used that a small quantity would last for an indefinite time.

Returning part of the way up the Kanawha River in a flat-boat, they saw a large number of slaves chained together to prevent their escape, some of whom were hatless and shoeless, and without sufficient clothing to protect them from the cold, even while they were being driven to market.

Mr. Laxon endeavored to improve methods of manufacturing salt, but was hindered by the opposition of rival claimants to the territory. Possession of title papers in those days afforded no assurance that the possession would be unmolested in the exercises of ownership.

Nor was this the only danger which menaced those who claimed land in that section. Numerous tribes of Indians had discovered the location of the salt licks, which they believed the Great Spirit had provided for their own use. They did not believe the white man had any right to interfere, and often contended for absolute possession.

It is said that Daniel Boone, the famous rifle

expert, hunter and Indian fighter, resided for a time in a cabin not far from the salt licks, for the possession of which these rival claimants contended.

About the time the Revolutionary War broke out, Boone with a company of men skilled in woodcraft, cut a path through the woods for more than two hundred miles from North Carolina to Kentucky and Virginia. As they carved their way through the wilderness, they were often compelled to resist attacks from hostile bands of Indians.

It was also known that natural gas escaped from the earth without the aid of pipe, drill or derrick, a short distance above the mouth of Elk River, but whether the Indians ever utilized gas in cooking the delicious venison steak, is not known. Being of a superstitious nature, it is not likely they ever ignited the gas for any purpose.

Perhaps Mr. Laxon was one of the first to invest in productive salt or gas territory, and after Leonard Lowell returned from the hospital, restored in mind and body, and having become rich by the inheritance of his uncle's fortune, he and Mr. Laxon entered into a copartnership with the avowed purpose of developing territory on both sides of the river.

But few persons had any faith in the project, but these men believed they would eventually realize large profits from their investment.

Having made preparations for some extensive development, they were one day engaged in erecting a scaffold or derrick, which would enable them to drill to greater depths than any yet reached, when the premature escape of a powerful gas pressure demolished the derrick, and seriously injured Leonard Lowell, while the mangled and lifeless body of Mr. Laxon was found dangling from the branches of a tree not far from the location of the well.

The sad and untimely death of Mr. Laxon cast a gloom over the entire country, and resulted in cessation of development for a good many years.

The sudden demise of an individual in the prime of life and robust manhood, reiterates with solemn emphasis, that life's duration may terminate at any moment.

Could those whose lives are given to pleasure, whose talents are never cultivated for any good purpose, be persuaded to lay aside worldly concerns long enough to realize that there exists only a film between life and death, a wonderful change in the manner of living would be inaugurated. But so long as everything goes well with them, no thoughts of the separation of soul and body presents itself to their consciousness,

Frederick Amiel compares life to a soap bubble:

"Life is but a soap bubble hanging from a reed pole; it is formed, expands to its full size,

clothes itself with loveliest colors of the prism, and even escapes at moments from the laws of gravitation, but soon the black speck appears in it and the globe of emerald and gold vanishes into space leaving behind it nothing but a simple drop of turbid water. All the poets have made this comparison, it is so striking and so true. To appear, to shine, to disappear, to be born, to suffer and die; is it not the whole sum of life, for a butterfly, for a nation, for a star?"

Ethel Laxon learned of the tragic death of her father, and she and Albert Gordon attended the funeral. While at the old homestead, in looking over some valuable papers, she discovered the last will and testament of her father, properly signed and acknowledged according to law. All of his immense wealth had been devised to her without reservation of any kind or character.

During all these years in which Mr. Laxon had been alienated from his daughter, his mind was never at rest. The more he pondered over the estrangement the more he realized the great injustice done, not only to his affectionate daughter, but to Albert Gordon.

There was no plausible reason for his refusal to consent to the marriage, and this fact indelibly impressed itself upon his fastidious mind in lamenting over his great loss. His only objection was, that Mr. Gordon was a school-teacher.

Continuing these meditations seriously, he became more conservative in his views, and no longer regarded those engaged in the profession of teaching as less deserving of respect than other persons.

He recalled the fact, that they are always leaders in every movement for the betterment of conditions of every worthy character, and are called upon to decide questions of public interest by properly reasonable and legitimate processes.

During the time of his gradual conversion, he was enabled to comprehend, that nothing but fatuous ignorance of the profession could induce one to condemn a teacher for that reason alone, as he had done in the case of Albert Gordon, who wished to marry his lovely daughter.

He was enabled to realize that nothing could be more elevating than to lay siege to the citadel of the mind of those whose usefulness would be required in all of life's varied vocations, and that, to influence the youth to higher ideals, to elevate and to strengthen the moral tone of the rising generation, was the acme of perfection in true manhood and womanhood.

As Mr. Laxon's heart softened toward his daughter, he imbibed the sentiment, as expressed by Newell D. Gilbert in Jean Mitchell's School:

"How is it that you do not see teaching to be the building of human minds up into, and in,

their Divine possibilities, with the consequent reach of beauty and blessing to the world?"

"How is it that you do not see teaching to be the great process by which the race shall one day be brought to see of its own age-long travail, in attaining freedom?"

"How is it that you do not see teaching as the highest and noblest, the most delicate and beautiful and grand of arts? The place to learn to receive spiritual birth as a teacher is at the feet of great teachers. Then and there you shall receive the artists vision that sees the angel in the block of stone, the nobility of manhood beneath the touseled head and unkempt garments of an unlikely lad; and in the vision find inspiration and wisdom and devotion and skill and purpose so to touch the lad's life and brood over it that you shall at least see ambition and purpose waken, if indeed you may not follow him up to the time of full growth in stature and character."

Long before his death, Mr. Laxon had become reconciled to his daughter and was willing to grant her request, but had neglected to make known his change of heart. As it was, she knew nothing of his intention to forgive, until the will was read which devised to her his vast estates.

Having spent a few days at her old home in adjusting matters pertaining to the property, they returned to the hospital to remain so long

as would be necessary on account of Albert Gordon's injuries.

Upon their return, they learned that a young lady had fallen overboard a vessel scheduled for Liverpool, England. There was no clue to her identity, unless, perhaps, she had owned certain trunks on board, on each of which was plainly written the name "Ellen Steuben."

Those who heard the story of Miss Steuben, and of her entanglement in love affairs in which she played a leading part, and in which Merrill Mayo and Leonard Lowell were also concerned, were not long in arriving at a conclusion as to the cause of her death. Yet it will never be known whether she accidentally fell overboard, or whether her soul sought surcease of sorrow by annihilation of the body.

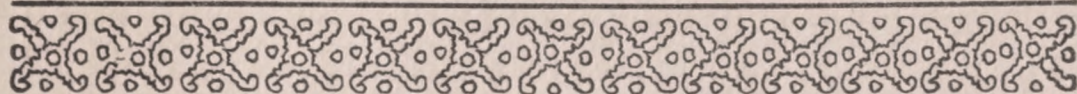
Albert Gordon was soon pronounced out of danger, and, on the very day that General Lee surrendered the army of the South to General Grant, there was a double wedding at the Sayard Hospital, the obligation having been given in a single ceremony.

Albert Gordon proclaimed to the world, that he desired to have the constant vigilance of so faithful a nurse as Ethel Laxon to accompany him on life's highway to the end of the journey.

And Leonard Lowell and Merrill Mayo who had received a pressing invitation to the Gordon-Laxon wedding, also denounced single life, and, to establish a complete estoppel to further

complication in love affairs, covenanted to and with each other, to forsake all other persons, and to remain true and steadfast until death should sever the ties which bound them as husband and wife.

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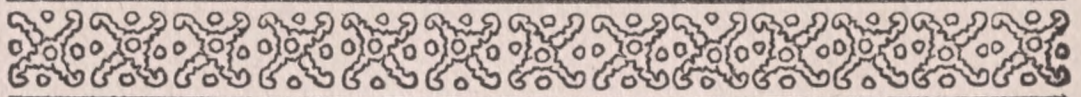
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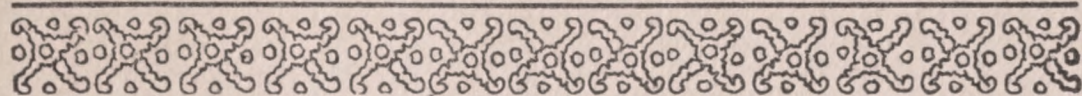
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